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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

A HISTORY OF THE CARE OF THE BLIND IN
THE STATE OF MARYLAND

A FIELD STUDY
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SERVICE ADMINISTRATION
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MASTER OF ARTS

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INTRODUCTION

In order to evaluate the History of the Care of the Blind in Maryland, it is necessary to know something of the general development of the care of the blind in the United States. Maryland followed the old poor law custom of including the blind as one of the dependent groups for whom public responsibility was accepted. The legal provisions found in an early poor law of the Colony of Maryland (1650),¹ are far removed from the provisions of the Social Security Act, adopted in August of 1935.² Maryland has kept pace with the other states in providing for blind care, and today it stands among the best of them, with its systems of education, rehabilitation and prevention. Prevention of blindness and sight conservation are included, as they deal with those who are partially blind, and because they will have a direct bearing on the future care of the blind in the state. It is not intended in this study to treat exhaustively any one part of the program but rather to discuss all services in such a way as to give a comprehensive picture of the development of Maryland's provision for this handicapped group.

Care in the United States

Provision for the care of the blind in the United States has been piecemeal, and limited in scope and locality. Action

¹See below, chap. i.

²See below, chap. v.

has generally followed in this order: (1) Educational: establishment and maintenance of schools; (2) Eleemosynary: Establishment of homes and pensions; (3) Industrial: creation of workshops for the adult blind; (4) Directive: Associations and Commissions to study the conditions of the blind; (5) Preventative: Legislative measures guarding diseases and accidents.³

Massachusetts was the first state to have a special school, the New England Institution for the Blind (later becoming the Perkins Institution and Massachusetts School for the Blind), being incorporated in 1829. At approximately the same time New York State and Pennsylvania established similar schools, under private management, but receiving state grants. In 1837, Ohio established the first State School, which was totally supported by public funds. Other states passed laws incorporating institutions of their own or providing for the education of blind children in the already established schools. In 1837 Maryland provided for the education of its blind children at the Pennsylvania School, and this was continued until 1853 when a school under private auspices was begun in that state.⁴ New schools continued to be established, usually on the Ohio plan, until in 1938 "every state either conducts a residential school of its own or has a working arrangement by which it pays the cost of educating its blind children in a similar school in a neighboring state."⁵ Some of the schools

³Harry Best, The Blind (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1919), Introduction, p. xxiii.

⁴Ibid., pp. 264-69.

⁵Helga Lande, What of the Blind? (New York: American Foundation for the Blind, 1938), p. 6.

established workshops for their pupils, and later enlarged these to include the adult blind. Some teaching of the adults was also tried on a small scale in connection with the workshops or schools.⁶

Since 1830 the blind have been included in the census enumeration, special schedules being made in 1880, 1890, 1900 and 1920, but subsequent checking and analysis of the returns have proven the census figures untrustworthy. This is due in part to the varied conceptions of blindness held by the public at large. The definition employed by the U. S. Bureau of Census states that a blind person is one who cannot see to read a book or other printed matter even with glasses.⁷ Different definitions are used by the American Medical Association, American Academy of Political Science, and state commissions, and the degrees of blindness--which may vary from impractical vision to total blindness--are classified in numerous ways. According to the U. S. Census returns there has been a gradual increase in the number of blind persons from 5,444 enumerated in 1830 to 63,593 in 1930.⁸ In 1930 approximately 5,800 children were enrolled in the 65 public and private residential schools for the blind in the United States.⁹

The first public pension system for the blind was a local one, created in New York City in 1865.¹⁰ Illinois inaugurated a

⁶Best, op. cit., pp. 452-57

⁷U. S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the U.S., No. 73 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1932), p. 81.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Lende, op. cit., p. 5

¹⁰Harry Best, Blindness and the Blind in the U.S. (New York: Macmillan Co., 1934), p. 549.

special county relief fund for the blind in 1903, as it was felt that blindness was so definite a cause of poverty that special provision should be made for it. The Illinois law, and that of several other states was declared unconstitutional, leaving the original Ohio law of 1898, which became final in 1908, creating the first state pension system for the blind.¹¹

Until the World War, work with the adult blind had lagged behind the development of work with the children. National interest had been shown in the census enumerations, but no action for blind assistance had been forthcoming. The Howe Printing Press, in connection with the Perkins Institution near Boston, began to seek Federal Aid in printing books for the blind as early as 1836, but was not then successful. However a general appeal to the New England States, brought forth a large sum, which as an endowment fund, exceeded one quarter of a million dollars in 1919. This press distributes a large amount of literature free of charge.¹² The American Printing House for the Blind, a private organization established in Kentucky in 1858,¹³ to print books for the blind, received national support in 1879. That year Congress appropriated \$10,000 annually to this association for the purpose of distributing books for the blind through the institutions already existing throughout the country.¹⁴ This therefore limited the service to the blind children. In 1907¹⁵ this endowment was made a per-

¹¹ Lende, op. cit., p. 7

¹² Best, The Blind, pp. 435-36.

¹³ Laws of Kentucky, 1858, c. 115, p. 192.

¹⁴ U.S. Statutes at Large, Vol. XI, sec. 186, p. 467 (1879).

¹⁵ U.S. Statutes at Large, Vol. XXXIV, Part 1, c. 3536, p. 460 (1907).

petual trust, which now reaches the adult blind, and with the increased Franking privilege allowed in 1904,¹⁶ free transportation of all types of literature for the blind has increased their circulation to all classes.

During the World War the Federal Government instituted War Risk Insurance for persons disabled in military service and provided for medical care, vocational rehabilitation and actual job placements.¹⁷ The Red Cross Institute for the Blind co-operates with the government to carry out its plans, and adds social and intellectual stimulus.¹⁸

During these years individual states had been devising systems to care for the blind, until in January, 1935, twenty-six of them had special relief laws for the blind. None of these laws however came within the requirements of the Social Security Act passed in August of that year. Under Title X, "Grants to States for Aid to the Blind," a fund of \$3,000,000 was appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1936, and additional yearly sums were authorized whereby the Federal Government could match state grants to the blind, up to a certain limit. Regulations regarding state plans, and eligibility requirements were included in the act (See below, chap. v). Since 1935 Federal Aid has encouraged certain states to revise existing laws, and other

¹⁶U. S. Statutes at Large, Vol. XIXIII, Part I, c. 1612, p. 313 (1904).

¹⁷U. S. Statutes at Large, Vol. XL, Part I, c. 105, p. 398 (1917).

¹⁸Best, The Blind, p. 700.

states to create laws for assisting the blind, until in June, 1939, 42 jurisdictions including the District of Columbia and Hawaii had approved plans, aiding 44,000 blind persons.¹⁹

Although the Social Security Act takes care of the financial need of the blind, this covers but one phase of their problem. Workers with the blind feel that the primary objective should be restoration to social and economic independence through improvement of vision (through medical care when possible), or through vocational training, employment, and the instruction of the adult blind in their homes--to adjust them generally to their handicap.²⁰ The public is coming to realize that blindness is not a mental handicap, but purely a physical disability which in most cases could have been prevented. Prevention of blindness is now the foremost aim and this is being dealt with through both public and private means as Public Health Services, educational measures, laws governing labor and hazardous machinery, adequate lighting campaigns and National Commissions which study the welfare of the blind.²¹

¹⁹ School of Law, Duke University, Law and Contemporary Problems, III, No. 2 (April, 1936), 269-73.

²⁰ Lende, op. cit., p. 8.

²¹ International Association for the Prevention of Blindness, The Number of Blind and the Protection of the Eyes in Different Countries. Replies to Questionnaire, Paris, 1937.

CHAPTER I

EARLY LEGISLATION IN MARYLAND

The history of the care of the blind in the State of Maryland parallels the general history of blind care throughout the world. The earliest legal provision which is found in the State Archives was a local out-pension system allowing for their care, along with the lame and halt. Nearly two hundred years elapsed before attention was again turned in their direction, and the first school for the blind was established. In slow succession committees were formed to investigate the condition of the adult blind, a workshop was established, and finally preventative work was begun by organized societies.

- The first documentary provision for the blind was found in an early poor law, which includes them along with the lame and halt. The following, pertaining to St. Mary's County, was passed in 1680 and entitled, "An Order for reliefe of the poor."

It is ordered, by and with the consent and approbation of the gen all Assembly, that all maymed, lame and blind persons within the County of St. Maries, not being able to get their living by working or otherwise shalbe maintayned & allowed (by an equall Assessee to bee levyed and brought in with the other levies uppon such Inhabitants of the County aforesaid as shall not make a free and willing contriution out of their charitable disposicions) sufficient competicon and means for the maintenance of all such Lame and other persons as aforesaid According as the Governor and Councell shall thinke fitt and reasonable.¹

¹Archives of Maryland, 1637-1664, I, 296.

Before the establishment of almshouses in the state, the county courts levied tobacco from year to year for the relief of the sick and infirm poor, this being the same way in which other county charges were levied.² Later on Local Trustees of the Poor were appointed, and given the authority to build almshouses for the care of "The poor, beggars, vagabonds, vagrants and other offenders" committed to their care.³ Twenty-five years later the first statewide provision was made, but was limited to those of the indigent group whose peculiar circumstances made care in an institution unfeasible. This was an out-pension system which allowed grants not exceeding \$30 per month to be paid to not more than ten persons in any one county.⁴ No statistics could be found showing the classification of the recipients of the pension. It might be assumed that the blind were included in the indigent group receiving help, since they were included with them in the "Act for the Relief of the Poor" in 1680, and no further mention of them as a special class had been made.

It was not until 1838 that the blind again received legislative action and the first state-wide law was passed, providing for the education of the young blind. This was only twelve years after the establishment of the first public schools in Baltimore. On March 17, 1838, "an Act to provide for the instruction of indigent blind persons, inhabitants of this State,"⁵ was

²Archives of Maryland, 1733-1738, Vol. XXXIX.

³The Laws of Maryland, 1773, Vol. I, c. 30.

⁴The Laws of Maryland, 1799, Vol. II, c. 65.

⁵Laws of Maryland, 1837-38, c. 173.

approved. This appropriated \$1,000 annually, out of the interest upon the State Surplus Fund, to be used under the direction of the Governor, for instruction, or placing for instruction such indigent blind persons as were recommended to him by the Trustees of the poor of each county. The individuals were to be residents of the county, financially unable to obtain instruction for themselves, and of good natural capacity. The minimum age requirement was seven years, the amount expended per individual was limited to \$200 per year, and the term of instruction to five years.⁶ It also provided that any money unused during the year would be applied to the same purposes in subsequent years, and would not change the amount of the yearly appropriation.⁷ The governor was given responsibility for reporting annually to the legislature the amount of money expended together with the names, ages, and residences of the recipients.⁸

Ten years prior to the passage of this bill, an "Act for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb"⁹ had been approved. This empowered the governor to draw up to \$5,000 per year for tuition of twenty persons to be sent to the Pennsylvania Institution for instruction. The money was paid directly to the institution. On March 16, 1840, a supplement to this act provided that any surplus money from this fund was to be applied to the education of indigent blind children, if there were more than could be provided for under the Act of 1837.¹⁰ The money thus far appropriated for the

⁶Ibid., sec. 1.

⁷Ibid., sec. 2.

⁸Ibid., sec. 3.

⁹Laws of Maryland, 1827, c. 140

¹⁰Laws of Maryland, 1839-40, c. 28.

blind was known as the School Fund for the Indigent Blind, which was part of the Free School Fund of the State. In 1842 a communication to the Legislature from the Treasurer of the Western Shore, relative to Education, explained the source and distribution of the Free School Funds. The Maryland Banks, and the American Life Insurance and Trust Company, paid annually into the State Treasury, 20% of their paid-in capital. This money was called the Free School Fund. Besides this, an amount equal to the interest of the state's share of the surplus revenue of the United States as had been deposited to the State's credit, was also appropriated for the support of the Free Schools. This amounted to around \$34,000 yearly, of which \$1,000 was annually allocated to the School Fund for the Indigent Blind.¹¹ The annual report of the Treasurer indicated the amount spent yearly for the Indigent Blind from the Free School Fund. For the year 1840 it showed disbursements of \$662.81 as tuition of Indigent Blind, leaving a balance to the School Fund for the Indigent Blind of \$1,419.40.¹² This would indicate that about five persons received some instruction during the year, as only \$200 was allowed per person. These children attended the Pennsylvania Institution for the Instruction of the Blind, in Philadelphia, as it was the nearest school of its kind.¹³

By 1846 the legislature had become aware of the fact that

¹¹Maryland House and Senate Documents, 1842, House Document B, p. 4.

¹²Annual Report of the Maryland Treasurer, 1840.

¹³W. D. Morrison, "A Brief History of the School," Forty-first Report, Maryland School for the Blind, p. 62.

five years of instruction was too limited a time in which to give the pupils anything like a grammar school education, and they added a supplement to the 1837 Act for the education of the Blind, extending the time to seven years and raising the minimum age requirement to nine years.¹⁴ During the same year, another supplement was added, making it mandatory for the levy courts or county commissioners of the counties, and the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore to inquire into, and report annually to the governor of the state, the number of blind, white persons of sound mind, whose fortunes prohibited their financing their own education at an institution for the blind.¹⁵ This latter supplement brought to light many individuals who were eligible for instruction at state expense, and it became necessary to increase the state appropriation for their care. Thereupon the legislature in 1850 repealed the Act of 1837, chapter 173, and all other acts pertaining to the education of the blind, and passed "An Act to provide for the Instruction of Indigent Blind Person, inhabitants of this State,"¹⁶ which doubled the annual appropriation. A sum not in excess of \$2,000 yearly was allocated from the interest on the state's surplus fund, to be applied under the governor's direction for instruction of blind persons in institutions. The earlier provisions, limiting the maximum yearly expenditure to \$200 per person, and the minimum age to nine, were re-enacted, and the term of instruction was raised to eight years.¹⁷ As before, any balance of the appropriations not used was to be applied to the fund for fu-

¹⁴Laws of Maryland, 1846, c. 44. ¹⁵Ibid., c. 132.

¹⁶Laws of Maryland, 1850, c. 209. ¹⁷Ibid., sec. 1.

ture use, and was in no way to affect the amount of yearly appropriation.¹⁸ The Governor was to report annually to the legislature the names, ages, and addresses of the different applicants, and the amount of money expended.¹⁹

The State Treasurer's report for the fiscal year ending December 1, 1852 reflects the increase in participants under the new law. Disbursements under "Tuition for the Indigent Blind"²⁰ total \$1,650.00, which was almost double the amount spent twelve years earlier. The first actual count of blind persons in Maryland was made in the census of 1850 and the results were published in 1852 in a summary study of statistics in Maryland, according to the seventh U. S. Census.²¹ This report showed a total of 307 blind persons of whom 193 were white, 71 free colored, and 43 slaves. They were classified according to sex and age groups. One-half of the number fell in the age group between thirty and sixty-nine years, about one-third were over sixty-nine, and a little less than one-fifth were under twenty-nine. The number eligible for instruction in blind institutions was limited to the white population of sound mind, over nine years of age. As it does not seem likely that persons over thirty years of age would be sent to boarding schools for the blind, this limited the number to the twenty-two males and twenty-two females whose ages were

¹⁸Ibid., sec. 2.

¹⁹Ibid., sec. 3.

²⁰Report of the Comptroller of the Treasury Department of the State of Maryland (Annapolis, 1853), p. 11.

²¹Joseph C. G. Kennedy, History and Statistics of the State of Maryland According to the Seventh Census of the U. S. (Washington: Gideon and Co., 1852), p. 32.

under thirty years. It is not known how many of the fifteen children under ten years of age were old enough to meet the school requirement of nine years, nor how many of those under thirty were of sound mind, so it can only be suggested that the number eligible to receive instruction was considerably less than forty-four.

About this time, a well-to-do family in Baltimore, which had sent two of its blind members to the Pennsylvania Institution for the Blind, became interested in the need for, and advisability of having a Blind School in Maryland. They in turn interested other socially-minded and influential people in their idea, and it was through the efforts of this group in the early 1850's that the first School for the Blind was established in Maryland. The incorporation and history of this School is discussed in Chapter II.

CHAPTER II

MARYLAND SCHOOLS FOR THE BLIND

In 1852, Mr. David Loughery, a blind man, and graduate of the Pennsylvania Institution for the Instruction of the Blind, while visiting in Baltimore, suggested the idea of a school for the blind. It is thought that his visit was prompted by Mr. Benjamin F. Newcomer, a distinguished Baltimore business man, whose relatives had also attended the Pennsylvania Institution. These two men worked out plans for a school and got the co-operation of five other outstanding citizens of the city, who interceded with the legislature for the incorporation of the School.¹

Incorporation of the First Institution for the Blind

On May 19, 1853, an "Act to Incorporate the Maryland Institution for the Instruction of the Blind" was passed and put into effect.² This act gave the corporation authority to sue and

¹Blanchard Randall, "Address of Welcome," Twenty-fifth Biennial Convention, American Association of Instructors of the Blind, p. 5

²Laws of Maryland, 1853, c. 203. Section 1, of the act named Messrs. J. Smith Hollins, Jacob I. Cohen, Jr., John H. McJilton, John Glenn, Wm. George Baker, and Benjamin F. Newcomer (and their successors), a corporation to carry out the act. This Board was composed of outstanding business and professional men from some of the cities most distinguished families. Mr. Glenn will be remembered as one of the founders of the Charity Organization Society. He was a civic-minded philanthropist and a progressive real estate dealer in Baltimore. He served on the Board

be sued, establish by-laws, rules and regulations as should seem necessary, and to do anything needed to carry out the provisions of the act.³ The object of the Institution was stated as the instruction of the blind.⁴ Power of receiving money and property, and purchasing and holding real and personal property⁵ was given to the nine⁶ board members who were to be elected annually. The Legislature reserved the right to change, amend, or repeal the act at pleasure.⁷

The Board members drew up the rules and regulations of the Institution. They left with themselves the authority to choose a president from their members, and to elect annually a Secretary, Treasurer, Consultory Physician, Attending Physician, and the Instructors.⁸ The duties of the officers were prescribed,⁹ the time of meeting and order of business named,¹⁰ and five Standing Committees appointed.¹¹ The duties of the Superintendent who was to be elected by the Board were listed, giving him

Of the Maryland Institution for the Instruction of the Blind for thirty-seven years. Mr. Newcomer was another business man who served on public commissions and boards of Railroads and Banks. He was generous in his contributions to the school and the main building of the present school bears his name. It is also interesting to note that four of the original board continued to serve on it for twenty-five years, and many sons of the old board members succeeded their fathers.

³ Ibid., sec. 1

⁴ Ibid., sec. 2

⁵ Ibid., sec. 3

⁶ Ibid., sec. 4.

⁷ Ibid., sec. 6.

⁸ Maryland Institution for the Instruction of the Blind, By-Laws, chaps. i and vi.

⁹ Ibid., sec. 4.

¹⁰ Ibid., c. 2.

¹¹ Ibid., c. 3. The committees named were Committee of Admission and Discharge, Committee of Finance, Committee on Household Affairs, and Committee on Female Visitors.

charge and responsibility for the conduct of the Institution, and requiring him to report to the Board, monthly and annually.¹² The Board further stipulated the eligibility requirement for pupils,¹³ which will be discussed under that topographical heading. The administrative authority remained exclusively in the hands of the Board until 1900 when upon the establishment of the Board of State Aid and Charities supervisory duties were granted to that body.¹⁴

Finances

Although this act of incorporation provided for the establishment of an institution, it appropriated no funds with which to do this. The Corporation therefore immediately petitioned the Legislature for building funds, and for additional appropriations for tuition purposes. At the next meeting of the Legislature, in March 1854, an act was passed making additional provisions for the instruction of the blind.¹⁵ The yearly appropriation was increased from \$2,000 to \$4,000,¹⁶ and the Governor was authorized to place eligible persons in the Maryland Institution for the Instruction of the Blind, when he was satisfied that the institution was ready to educate blind persons.¹⁷ This appropriation provided for 40²⁰ pupils, as the maximum yearly expenditure per

¹²Ibid., c. 4. ¹³Ibid., c. 9. ¹⁴see below, p.

¹⁵Laws of Maryland, 1854, c. 224.

¹⁶Ibid., sec. 1. The earlier appropriation had been limited to \$2,000 by Act of 1850, c. 209. See above, chap. I, p. 11.

¹⁷Ibid., sec. 2.

person was \$200.¹⁸ The provision for building purposes was appropriated on a matching basis, the State Treasurer to pay \$5,000 to the Institution as soon as he was satisfied that \$5,000 had been added to it from private funds.¹⁹ Private donations were generous and in 1854, the state matched \$5,000 from private funds,²⁰ and the Board purchased the historic old Faca Mansion at 649 West Saratoga Street²¹ at a cost of \$26,500.²² The President of the Board, Mr. J. H. McHenry,²³ contributed an additional \$2,500 which was used to make immediate improvement,²⁴ and the school was put in readiness for its first pupils, which were enrolled in December of ^{same} that/year.

The number of indigent students was limited to twenty, by the fact that the State appropriation of \$4,000 covered tuition for that number,²⁵ but up until 1857 there were less than fifteen

¹⁸ See above, p. 11

¹⁹ Laws of Maryland, 1854, c. 224, sec. 3.

²⁰ Morrison, op. cit., p. 63.

²¹ Maryland School for the Blind, Biennial Report (Sixty-fourth and Sixty-fifth) (Overlea, 1929,) p. 4.

²² Randall, op. cit., p. 5.

²³ In January, 1854, four more members were added to the original board which was incorporated by the charter. Mr. John Glenn had resigned, and Messers W. W. Glenn, J. Howard McHenry, Jacob Trust, and Dr. William Fisher were appointed. Mr. McHenry was elected President; Mr. Cohen, Treasurer; Mr. Newcomer, Secretary; and the Reverend McKenny, Superintendent. Mr. Loughery who had acted as Superintendent since the Charter was granted, resigned to become principle teacher in the School. He continued in that capacity until his death on July 8, 1858, after giving four very valuable years of effort to the school. Second Annual Report, p. 8.

²⁴ Morrison, op. cit., p. 63.

²⁵ Laws of Maryland, 1854, c. 224.



enrolled in the school. During that year eight new pupils were added,²⁶ and the Treasurer in billing the State for tuition at the end of the year, found that the Committee of Ways and Means had overlooked this last Act of appropriation, and had carried only the original appropriation of \$2,000 a year to the credit of the institution. The Board of Directors therefore planned to petition the next Legislature for the difference. By 1859, only \$14,000 had been granted, whereas the institution was entitled to \$24,000, thus leaving \$10,000 due for tuition purposes.²⁷

State money was granted under two headings, "To the education of the Indigent Blind" which was payable in lump sums of \$200 a year for each state beneficiary residing in the Institution and "For use of the Institution" or "Blind Asylum" which was a sum available for building and other general purposes. Up to January 1, 1860, the State had donated \$15,000 for this latter fund.²⁸ Private donations and money from benefits applied to the building fund, amounted to \$1,296.25 in 1859, besides the money raised by concerts and sale of beads and other handwork. In 1859, an interested group of ladies in Baltimore, organized a Fair Association, and with the co-operation of the students, raised \$2,953.67. Girls in the neighborhood of the School gave local fairs to raise money. On these occasions blind pupils often gave

²⁷ Maryland School for the Blind, Biennial Report (Sixty-fourth and Sixty-fifth), p. 52.

²⁸ Maryland Institution for the Instruction of the Blind, Second Report (Baltimore: Joseph Young, 1860), p. 30.

²⁹ Maryland Institution for the Instruction of the Blind, Third Report (Baltimore: Henry A. Robinson, 1864), pp. 6 and 7.

musical performances which so impressed the spectators, that they made liberal donations to the school.²⁹

Since the money of the school had been exhausted in trying to equip an inadequate building, and state funds had not been received as planned, the Board of Directors, in 1860, petitioned the Legislature for additional financial help for both tuition and building purposes. The directors suggested that \$18,000 a year for 1860 and 1861 be appropriated.³⁰ This petition was followed up by Legislative Action on March 1, 1860, when the "Act to Amend the Seventh Section of Article 33 of the Code of Public General Laws, relating to the Indigent Blind, and to make additional provision for their instruction," was passed.³¹ The new part of the Act appropriated \$6,000 annually for tuition of the blind, and \$10,000 a year for 1860 and 1861, to be used for extending the building of the Institution and for increasing the educational facilities. The building fund began to grow and the Board of Directors purchased lots on the northern boundary of the town as the site for the new school.³²

Pupils

During the early years of the institution's growth, the increase in the number of pupils was very slow, beneficiaries being limited by State Legislation, and the By-Laws of the Institution. The Act of 1854 which had appropriated \$2,000 yearly, thus

²⁹Ibid., p. 11.

³⁰Ibid., p. 5.

³¹Laws of Maryland, 1860, c. 341.

³²Maryland Institution for the Instruction of the Blind, Third Report.

limiting the number of state beneficiaries to ten, also set the minimum age at seven years, and stipulated that the applicants be of good natural capacity and residents of the state.³³ The Act of 1854 increased the number of state beneficiaries to twenty.³⁴ The Board of Directors in establishing rules for admission, provided for both state and private pupils. Children between the ages of seven and eighteen, who were deemed incapable of distinguishing the letters of a printed book after examination by the attending physician at the school, could be admitted by the Committee of Admissions and Applications, and special applications were to be referred to the Board for action.³⁵ Parents or guardians were required to pay tuition for and clothe children while in the institution, at the same rate as those under public support if of sufficient means, and to transport them to and from it, at the committee's request.³⁶ Pupils were to board and lodge at the institution, leaving premises only with the Superintendent's permission, and were allowed to attend church services of their own choice.³⁷ The Board reserved the right to discharge pupils who proved to be either physically or mentally unfit, or those who continued to misbehave after admonition.³⁸ There had been only a slight change in the regulations regarding admission since the first By-Laws were established.³⁹

³³See above, p. 11.

³⁴See above, p. 16

³⁵Maryland Institution for the Instruction of the Blind, By-Laws, c. 9, sec. 1.

³⁶Ibid., sec. 2.

³⁷Ibid., sec. 3.

³⁸Ibid., sec. 4.

³⁹In the By-Laws--1938, sec. 1 eliminates the minimum age,

Three pupils were admitted to the school on December 7, 1854. They were Samuel B. Stewart and Mary E. Vernon of Baltimore City, and Joseph Howell of Washington County.⁴⁰ From March to November of the next year eight more pupils were admitted. During 1856 no new ones were enrolled, but in 1857 another eight were accepted. Two more in 1858, and one during 1859, made the total enrollment as of December 1, 1859, twenty-one pupils, of whom eleven were boys and ten girls. All but one of these were state beneficiaries.⁴¹ During that year the Superintendent made a survey and estimated that there were between seventy and eighty blind children in the state, of whom forty were eligible for instruction,⁴² but unable to receive it due to limitations in funds, and lack of space in the institution. By the end of 1863 the school had had a total of forty-nine individual pupils enrolled since its opening.⁴³ It is interesting to note that during that year there were seventeen pupils from ten different counties and thirteen from Baltimore City. Of the twenty-one pupils registered as of December 1, 1863, eighteen were state beneficiaries and three private pupils.⁴⁴ The fact that the larger number of pupils en-

but holds to the maximum as before, and sec. 2 has added that parents or guardians of applicants shall answer certain questions in writing when making application.

⁴⁰Maryland Institution for the Instruction of the Blind, Second Report, p. 34. Although later Biennial Reports give the enrollment as one in 1853, and two in 1854, it is thought that the statement found in the early report is correct.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 34.

⁴²Ibid., p. 5.

⁴³Maryland School for the Blind, Biennial Report (Sixty-fourth and Sixty-fifth), p. 52.

⁴⁴Maryland Institution for the Instruction of the Blind, Third Report, p. 15

rolled were from the counties indicates the Superintendent's successful efforts to make the institution known throughout the state. The Board by this time had become aware of the fact that the eight-year term of instruction⁴⁵ was inadequate to meet the needs of some of the more promising pupils, and they petitioned the Legislature for an increased term. In 1860 the Legislature passed a special act increasing the term of instruction of Josephine Buckler of St. Mary's County for three years.⁴⁶ A similar act was passed for Eliza Jones Bassford extending her term of instruction for two years, in 1862,⁴⁷ but nothing was enacted to increase the general term for all pupils until twenty years later.

Educational System

In the midst of all its financial difficulties and legislative limitations, the school had advanced remarkably in importance and usefulness. New facilities were added for instruction, as experience pointed the way to, and need for improvement. The object and spirit of the institution was to equip persons to support themselves as much as possible, and to educate them so that through knowledge and ability they might gain some degree of independence in society. This aim, as set forth in the first report of the school, is worthy of quoting:

The object of this institution is not to open an asylum where the unfortunate inmates may expect to pass their lives under conditions peculiarly favorable. It is not to make

⁴⁵Laws of Maryland, 1850, c. 209, sec. 1.

⁴⁶Laws of Maryland, 1860, c. 92.

⁴⁷Laws of Maryland, 1862, c. 91.

them acquainted with comforts and enjoyments, only that on being sent back into the world they may feel the more bitterly their misfortunes and their loneliness.

But it is, if possible, to fit them to provide for themselves after they leave its walls, if not fully to maintain themselves, as may be the case with only a part, at least to contribute largely towards their own support, to give them a portion amongst their fellowmen, to give them an interest in the world, and break in upon the feeling of isolation which must enshroud the uneducated blind, to bring them within the circle of society, to impart to them information and skill wherewith to rely upon their own exertions, and take a place in which they shall not feel themselves only a burden upon their friends or castaways upon the charity of strangers.⁴³

Mr. Charles Keener was appointed Superintendent in October, 1858, following the resignation of the Reverend Mr. McKenney. His staff consisted of three other regular teachers, and three assistants. Studies included: Reading, Writing, Grammar, Geography, History, Arithmetic, Philosophy, and Music. A workshop for the boys had been established at a cost of \$8000, permitting the making of brushes, brooms and mats. Girls were taught bead and needle work, and household occupations. These industrial arts were taught not with the idea of profit, but to help the children learn to use their hands, and to keep them occupied. Emphasis was placed on the study of music which had a great appeal to the students. Piano recitals were frequently given, and the school orchestra consisting of eighteen persons gave concerts at various functions.⁴⁹

The health of the children was closely guarded by an attending and a consultant physician. All of the children were

⁴³ Maryland Institution for the Instruction of the Blind, First Annual Report, p. 7, quoted in the First Annual Report, Maryland Workshop for the Blind (Baltimore, 1909), pp. 11 and 12.

⁴⁹ Maryland Institution for the Instruction of the Blind, Second Report, pp. 7 and 20.

vaccinated on admission (if not previously done) and the physicians' reports indicated the general good health of the group. At the close of each class, ten minutes were allowed for recreation. The causes of blindness were tabulated for all new students. This phase of the work will be discussed later, in Chapter IV.

Some idea of the daily school schedule was given under "Regulations."⁵⁰

6 A.M.	Rise	3 1/2 to 4 1/2	Orchestra
6 1/2	Prayers and Breakfast	6	Supper
8 1/2 to 12	Recitations (with a recess of ten minutes at close of each hour)	7	Prayers and Reading from books and papers
		9	Youngest ones retire
12 1/2	Dinner	10	The house closes
1 1/2 to 3 1/2	Recitations		

Establishment of the New School

As the need for larger quarters increased and the general public became more aware of the educational benefits afforded children at the school, the Board of Directors increased its efforts in seeking public and private contributions. Private subscriptions had amounted to \$20,000 by July 1860, and state appropriations for building purposes to \$31,000.⁵¹ However the war in 1861 caused depreciation of currency, and increased labor prices, and the building project was necessarily delayed. In 1864 the Director of the Institution petitioned the Legislature for \$60,000

⁵⁰Ibid... p/ 33

⁵¹Maryland School for the Blind, Forty-first Report,
p. 64.

for the purpose of buying additional lots, and erecting the school, but this request was \$10,000 in excess of what was granted by the General Assembly in 1865, \$30,000 being appropriated for 1865, and \$20,000 for 1866.⁵² During the same year, an appeal to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore brought forth a resolution appropriating \$10,000 for the school building.⁵³ In 1867 the state donated another \$30,000⁵⁴ and the City, \$15,000,⁵⁵ and the main building was completed by the following summer. The building was made of white marble from Baltimore County,⁵⁶ and the total cost was around \$150,000.⁵⁷

On Friday, November 20, 1868, the school was dedicated, and the following account of the exercise was given in the Chronicles of Baltimore for that year.

The ceremonies were commenced by the singing of a chant by the larger pupils, accompanied on the organ by Professor William Harmon. Reverend Dr. Randolph of the Protestant Episcopal Church offered a prayer, after which a chorus was sung by the pupils. W. W. Allen, Esq., of the Board of Directors, read the annual report. The programme was closed by a benediction delivered by Reverend Dr. Crosby.⁵⁸

⁵²Laws of Maryland, 1865, c. 73, sec. 1.

⁵³Ordinances of the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore, 1864, Resolution No. 163.

⁵⁴Laws of Maryland, 1867, c. 422.

⁵⁵Ordinances of the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore, 1867, Resolution No. 375.

⁵⁶J. Thomas Scharf, History of Baltimore City and Baltimore County (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1891), p. 390.

⁵⁷Maryland School for the Blind, Forty-first Report, p. 64.

⁵⁸J. Thomas Scharf, The Chronicles of Baltimore (Turnbull Bros., 1874), p. 675.

During these same years steps had been taken to increase the amount of state funds for tuition purposes. In 1865 the maximum tuition per year for state beneficiaries was raised to \$300,⁵⁹ and three years later the yearly appropriation of tuition was increased from \$6,000 to \$15,000.⁶⁰

In order to locate the blind persons throughout the state, the Superintendent of the school had sent letters to all of the Ministers, Physicians, and Teachers in the state, requesting them to report all blind children to him, in order that they might receive instruction. In this way many were located, and the enrollment of the school increased considerably; fourteen new ones being admitted in 1868, twelve in 1869, and thirteen in 1870.⁶¹ The U. S. Census of 1870 showed 427 blind persons in Maryland.⁶² These canvasses of the state brought to light many colored blind and deaf children for whom no educational facilities were available, there being a "well founded prejudice against the reception and care of this class of children in the Institution established for the use of the white children."⁶³ Provision had been made for the white deaf-mutes as early as 1827.⁶⁴ The members of the Mary-

⁵⁹Laws of Maryland, 1865, c. 75, sec. 5.

⁶⁰Laws of Maryland, 1868, c. 205, sec. 3

⁶¹Maryland School for the Blind, Biennial Report, Fifty-fifth and Fifty-sixth, p. 37.

⁶²Statistical Abstract of the U.S., 1939, No. 73 (Washington: Government Printing Office), p. 81.

⁶³Maryland Institution for the Instruction of the Blind, Sixteenth Report, p. 24.

⁶⁴Laws of Maryland, 1827, c. 140.

land Institution for the Deaf and Dumb and the Maryland Institution for the Instruction of the Blind, began to work on plans to meet the need of the colored children.

Institution for the Colored Blind
and Deaf Mutes

In 1872 the Board of Directors from each of the existing institutions delegated three of their members to serve on a Joint Committee, which was to organize the new institution for the colored children, and petition the Legislature for funds.⁶⁵ The public's sympathy with this cause was shown by the additional appropriation of \$10,000 for 1872, and the same amount for 1873.⁶⁶ The Joint Committee tried to rent suitable quarters, but were unsuccessful, so they purchased a large house at 92 South Broadway, at a cost of \$9,000, with an annual ground rent of \$175.00. The building was fitted with the necessary working materials and was ready for the admission of boarding pupils by October 1872. Mr. F. D. Morrison,⁶⁷ Superintendent of the Maryland Institution for the Blind, was made Superintendent of the new school, which was

⁶⁵ Maryland Institution for the Instruction of the Blind, Twelfth Report, p. 20.

⁶⁶ Maryland Institution for the Instruction of the Blind, Seventeenth Report, p. 24.

⁶⁷ Mr. F. D. Morrison was superintendent of the Maryland Institution for the Instruction of the Blind from April, 1864 until his death in 1905, and his name is associated with the growth and progress of both the institutions for the white and colored. Born in Maryland, and educated in the private schools, he completed his work for a degree in law, but was not admitted to the bar because of his Confederate sympathies. He worked two years as Assistant Superintendent of the Maryland House of Refuge, and one year as teacher at Gerard College in Philadelphia before assuming the duties of Superintendent at the Maryland Institution. Forty-second Report, Maryland School for the Blind, p. 7.

named the Institution for the Colored Blind and Deaf-mutes, and to him goes the credit for the swift completion of the project. He planned the school on the same basis as the institution for the white children, and appointed a matron and three teachers to carry on the work.⁶⁸ During the first year the school received eighteen pupils of whom ten were blind and eight were deaf-mutes.⁶⁹

The applications for admission increased rapidly, and the school soon outgrew its accommodations, and it was necessary to erect an additional building in 1875. In 1879 the Directors purchased the former Boys School of St. Paul's Parish, at 258 West Saratoga Street, at a cost of \$19,000,⁷⁰ continuing for seven years, moving then to 649 West Saratoga Street,⁷¹ where it remained until the present school was erected near Overlea, Maryland, in 1907. Since its annual reports were in most instances published with those for the Maryland School for the Blind (White), further discussion will combine the facts pertaining to the two schools.

During these years of progress instruction in manual training became a regular part of the school's work, and shops and stores were established by Legislative Act, extending the benefits

⁶⁸ Joint Special Committee, Institution for the Colored Blind and Deaf-mutes, Second Annual Report, p. 20. Mrs. E. M. Jenison was appointed matron; the Reverend Samuel A. Adams, teacher of deaf-mutes; Louis D. Zungstein, teacher of the blind; and John T. Gibbon, master of shops.

⁶⁹ Joint Special Committee, Institution for the Colored Blind and Deaf-mutes, Third Annual Report, quoted in Seventeenth Report, Maryland Institution for the Instruction of the Blind, p. 24.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 25.

⁷¹ Maryland School for the Colored Blind and Deaf, Fifteenth Annual Report, p. 3.

of this work to the adult blind.⁷² This phase of the institution's work will be discussed under Workshop for the Blind in Chapter III.

Additional Legislative Acts

In 1886 the name of the corporation "The Maryland Institution for the Instruction of the Blind" was changed to "The Maryland School for the Blind."⁷³ That same year the school succeeded in getting legislative approval of two things which it had long deemed necessary. The age of admittance was lowered from 9 ^tyo 7 ^{see p 20} years,⁷⁴ thus permitting the school to start training at a more feasible age; and the term of instruction, which was formerly limited to 8 years,⁷⁵ was made unlimited, allowing for completion of high school grades.⁷⁶ By this same act the annual state appropriation was increased from \$10,000 to \$15,000.⁷⁷ The state appropriation remained at \$15,000 until 1892 when it was increased to \$21,600.⁷⁸

Up until 1900 the School was not responsible to any state supervising agency, but made its annual reports and requests for appropriations directly to the Governor. In 1877 the Governor requested an investigation of all public charities in the state,

⁷² Laws of Maryland, 1874, c. 236

⁷³ Laws of Maryland, 1886, c. 481.

⁷⁴ Ibid., c. 278, sec. 3.

⁷⁵ Laws of Maryland, 1885, c. 75.

⁷⁶ Laws of Maryland, 1886, c. 278, sec. 3.

⁷⁷ Ibid. ⁷⁸ Laws of Maryland, 1892, c. 272.

and appointed a commission for this purpose, with a member of the State Board of Health, as chairman, and this commission returned a favorable report for the Maryland School for the Blind.⁷⁹ In January of 1900 the Maryland Legislature enacted a bill creating a central state supervising agency known as the Board of State Aid and Charities, to which all state-aided institutions had to apply for funds.⁸⁰ The Board was to investigate their applications and make recommendations for yearly appropriations to the Legislature.⁸¹ In 1904 the powers of the Board were extended to allow investigation of all existing state-aided institutions, and co-ordination of the whole system of public aid.⁸² In all of the reports of the Board which give a specific statement regarding conditions of the institutions, no improvements are recommended for the Maryland School for the Blind.

Building of Present School for the Blind

As Baltimore City began to grow and spread in area, the School for the Blind was being surrounded by other buildings, and there were threats to open Calvert Street through the School property. These difficulties, together with the inadequacy of the buildings caused the Directors to purchase 92 acres of land five miles north of the City near Overlea, in 1906. The following year two buildings, erected on the new property at a cost of \$88,000, were used for the Colored Blind and Deaf Mutes. The old school

⁷⁹C. W. Chancellor, Report on the Public Charities of Maryland (Frederick, Md.: Bangham Bros., 1877), pp. 57-58.

⁸⁰Laws of Maryland, 1900, c. 679. ⁸¹Ibid., sec. 344.

⁸²Laws of Maryland, 1904, c. 549,

occupied by the white blind children, was sold in 1902, and the receipts were applied to the erection of four children's cottages, a Superintendent's cottage, a Central Administration and School building, and a Central plant for heating, lighting, water, power, and refrigeration purposes on the new site. The school was carried on in temporary quarters in the 1200 block of Charles Street, until 1911 when the new buildings were completed, and the children moved in.⁸³ The buildings of the two schools are entirely separate, but both are planned on the cottage system, each cottage having its own dining room and kitchen, and a housemother, maid, and cook to care for the children. It is the purest cottage system among the blind schools in this country.⁸⁴ The Central building, named Newcomer Hall, is formed in the shape of the letter H, and consists of two stories, and a basement. This houses the classrooms, offices, Assembly Hall, Music Room, and gymnasium. The total outlay for the building and grounds was over \$500,000,⁸⁵ \$100,000 of which came from the endowment fund. The present faculty consists of a total of 26 teachers in both departments.⁸⁶ The employment of school personnel has been put under the supervision of the Superintendent, who submits to the Board for approval the names of persons required for instruction and care of the

⁸³ Maryland School for the Blind, Biennial Report (Forty-seventh and Forty-eighth).

⁸⁴ Statement, John F. Hledsoe, Superintendent, Maryland School for the Blind, personal interview, May, 1940.

⁸⁵ Maryland School for the Blind, Biennial Report (Forty-seventh and Forty-eighth).

⁸⁶ Statement, John F. Hledsoe, op. cit.

pupils. No mention can be found of the qualifications of the personnel.⁸⁷

The educational system of both schools has kept abreast of the times. A kindergarten was started as early as 1905, and the other grades have been made comparable to the public school system. Capable pupils in the high school are allowed to complete their last two years in the City High Schools, and are transported daily by bus. A number of pupils have completed higher education in universities and colleges, and became lawyers, clergymen and teachers of piano. Others are self-supporting through occupations as merchants, mechanics, farmers, piano and radio repairmen, typists, and switchboard operators.⁸⁸ There is vocational training for pupils in the school, but no follow-up work is done with them after they leave.

Attendance

In 1906 a compulsory school attendance bill became law. This required all blind and deaf children between the ages of 6 and 10 years of age to attend school for eight months, or during the scholastic year.⁸⁹ This law did not seem to affect the number of new students enrolled yearly. The school enrollment from the first year to the present time shows a gradual increase in the number of pupils as additional provisions were made for them, and

⁸⁷ Maryland School for the Blind, By-Laws, Charter and Legislative Acts to 1933, p. 5.

⁸⁸ Maryland School for the Blind, Forty-second Annual Report, p. 65.

⁸⁹ Laws of Maryland, 1906, c. 236.

a later decrease, due to the decrease in blindness among children, and the fact that Sight Conservation classes are now training some that would otherwise be at the Maryland School.

Sight Conservation Classes started in Baltimore in 1926 and during the next two years two applicants for the Maryland School were rejected because of too great vision and were referred to the Conservation classes.⁹⁰ The eye examination of pre-school and first to third grade children since that time has also eliminated many pupils that might have applied to the Maryland School for the Blind later on. The following tables for a representative period include blind children from neighboring states, whose tuition was paid by their state, and a few private out-of-state pupils.⁹¹

⁹⁰ See below, chap. v.

⁹¹ Students from Washington, D. C., have been enrolled since 1866 and their tuition has been increased from the regular school rate to \$600 a year; West Virginia sent pupils to Maryland until its own school was recently established. Delaware, South Carolina, Virginia and Georgia formerly sent their blind pupils to Maryland School, and New Jersey continues to send about 6 a year to the colored department. Statement, John Mledsoe, op. cit.

TABLE 1

YEARLY ENROLLMENT OF WHITE CHILDREN, MARYLAND
SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND, BY STATES, FOR
TWENTY YEAR PERIOD, 1910-1930

Session	Maryland	Other	Total
1910-11	75	16	91
1911-12	77	15	92
1912-13	94	15	109
1913-14	..	..	119
1914-15	..	..	121
1915-16	94	21	115
1916-17	97	16	113
1917-18	95	12	107
1918-19	86	14	100
1919-20	88	16	101
1920-21	86	14	100
1921-22	90	15	105
1922-23	91	14	105
1923-24	90	12	102
1924-25	89	12	101
1925-26	..	..	91
1926-27	75	15	90
1927-28	73	15	88
1928-29	72	12	84
1929-30	74	14	88

From 1930 through 1938 the total figures decreased only slightly remaining around 80, but the out-of-state enrollment showed an increase of several persons.

In the Colored Department there has been a gradual increase in enrollment, for both deaf and blind, and the school anticipates that this will continue, although no reason is given for the increase.⁹²

⁹² Maryland School for the Blind, Biennial Report (Seventy-second and Seventy-third), pp. 36-37.

TABLE 2

ENROLLMENT, MARYLAND SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND, COLORED
BLIND DEPARTMENT, FOR EVERY FIFTH YEAR FROM
1872-1932, SHOWING NEW PUPILS ADMITTED
EACH SESSION AND TOTAL ENROLLMENT
FOR THE SESSION

Session	New Pupils	Total
1872-1873	7	7
1877-1878	9	16
1882-1883	9	20
1887-1888	5	19
1892-1893	7	22
1897-1898	5	27
1902-1903	4	24
1907-1908	2	13
1912-1913	3	26
1917-1918	4	23
1922-1923	2	26
1927-1928	2	22
1932-1933	3	23

Financial Situation

The financial situation of the school has changed considerably from the early days of great dependence upon private contributions to the present days of practically total public support. In 1912 the annual state appropriation was increased from \$21,000 to \$33,000, and the tuition was raised to \$350 per year.⁹³ In 1924 the State Legislature levied a per capita charge on the cities and counties for each student committed to the school, to be an additional income over and above the yearly appropriation of \$33,000.⁹⁴ This act made it mandatory for each county, and the city of Balti-

⁹³ Laws of Maryland, 1912, c.200, p. 395.

⁹⁴ Laws of Maryland, 1924, c. 376, p. 970.

more to pay \$200 a year to the school for the education and care of each blind minor or colored deaf minor enrolled in the School.⁹⁵ The County Commission of each county and the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore were authorized to levy taxes on the assessable property to cover this cost.⁹⁶

The Colored Department had received a separate appropriation of \$10,000 yearly from its start until 1912, when the amount was raised to \$12,000 yearly.⁹⁷ Both schools then had several increases in appropriation going as high as \$55,000 yearly for the white department in 1924,⁹⁸ and \$15,000 for the colored department the same year.⁹⁹ In 1933 the yearly amount was decreased to \$50,000 for the white,¹⁰⁰ and in 1935 to \$13,000 for the colored department,¹⁰¹ and these same amounts are in effect today. Table 3 shows the change in state appropriations, giving the date changed and the amount appropriated. Each allotment continued to be appropriated yearly until a new amount was authorized.

⁹⁵ Ibid., sec. 1

⁹⁶ Ibid., sec. 2.

⁹⁷ Laws of Maryland, 1912, c. 556, p. 791

⁹⁸ Laws of Maryland, 1924, c. 176, p. 176.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Laws of Maryland, 1933, c. 597, p. 1276

¹⁰¹ Laws of Maryland, 1935, c. 285, p. 285.

TABLE 3

STATE APPROPRIATIONS TO MARYLAND SCHOOL
FOR THE BLIND, FOR EDUCATION OF
INDIGENT BLIND, BY YEARS AND
AMOUNTS, AS ENACTED BY
THE STATE LEGISLATURE

White Department

Year	Amount
1853	\$ 2,000 ^a
1854	4,000
1860	6,000
1868	15,000
1892	21,000
1912	33,000
1920	36,000
1922	47,000
1924	55,000
1933	50,000

Colored Department

Year	Amount
1872	\$10,000
1912	12,000
1920	13,000
1924	15,000
1935	13,000

^aThis amount was appropriated in
1837.

The Colored Department of the School has depended solely on public contributions, and the White Department now receives less than \$4,000 a year from private funds. A tabular picture of the recent income of both departments shows the sources of these funds as divided between the governmental units, donations, and sale of products.

TABLE 4

CURRENT RECEIPTS OF THE MARYLAND SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND
BY DEPARTMENTS, OCTOBER 1937 TO SEPTEMBER 1938^a

Total	Sale of Products	Fees or Board Paid	Private Funds	Public Funds		
				Total	State	City or County
White Department						
108,348.54	6,991.59	6,400.00	5,438.66	68,200.00	50,000.00	18,200.00
Colored Department						
44,440.00	4,340.00	18,820.00	.....	23,300.00	15,000.00	10,300.00

^aCompiled from statistics in the Nineteenth Biennial Report of the Board of State Aid and Charities.

The School's total disbursements for the same period were \$117,389.11,¹⁰² and the total enrollment was 157,¹⁰³ making the per capita cost of caring for children at the school \$749.61. This is a decided increase over the per capita cost of \$294.76 which existed 50 years earlier.¹⁰⁴ The increase in per capita cost during the past 50 years allows for expansion of program, improved care and also the change in the cost of living.

¹⁰² Board of State Aid and Charities, Nineteenth Biennial Report, p. 57.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 68

¹⁰⁴ Maryland School for the Blind, Twentieth Report.

CHAPTER III

MARYLAND WORKSHOP FOR THE BLIND

Movement on behalf of the Adult Blind, 1871-1908

The movement resulting in the establishment of a workshop for the adult blind in Maryland began in the shops connected with the School for the Blind in the State. As early as 1858 the Maryland Institution for the Instruction of the Blind added a workshop to the school for the purpose of providing brush, broom and mat-making facilities to the older students. Brooms had previously been made at an expense to the school, so the shop was therefore not expected to be a profit-making scheme, but a form of education, imparting skill and co-ordination in the use of the hands. A carpenter's bench and tools were made accessible to the younger boys for the same reason, and the girls were taught knitting, sewing and beadwork.¹ It is thought that perhaps the first manual training in wood done by the blind in this country was done in Maryland.²

After the shop had been in existence a little over ten years, the Superintendent became aware of the need of a shop for

¹ Maryland Institution for the Instruction of the Blind, Second Report, p. 8.

² Maryland Workshop for the Blind, First Annual Report (Baltimore: Published by the Corporation, 1909), p. 13.

the graduates who had attained skill in the work room, in order that they might continue with their trade. In 1871 in the annual report he stated the need for a workshop and salesroom for the adults, separate from the school, as follows:

Many of our young men, who became good workmen in our shop, are unable to make any practical use of their skill after leaving the institution, because they have not the means to purchase an outfit; and this suggests the necessity for an industrial institution, where the adult blind could always find employment at fair wages. This should be entirely separate from the educational institution, and should be so conducted as to be, not a reward for idleness, but an incentive to a moral and industrial life. Our success will never be complete until such an institution is organized.³

The Directors of the Maryland Institution thereupon applied to the Legislature for the privilege of spending part of their income to erect a workshop and salesroom for the adult blind. On April 11, 1874, a bill was passed authorizing the Directors to spend such part of their income and endowment fund as they saw fit, to establish a workshop and open a salesroom for articles manufactured by the blind, and to extend the benefits of same to the adult blind of the State.⁴ In October of the same year, a house was rented at 86 North Howard Street⁵ and a workshop and salesroom set up, under the supervision of the Maryland Institution for the Instruction of the Blind. The workshop was divided into a broom-shop, mattress shop, and place for basket

³ Maryland Institution for the Instruction of the Blind, Ninth Report, pp. 11-12, quoted in Maryland Workshop for the Blind, First Annual Report, p. 14.

⁴ Laws of Maryland, 1874, c. 236.

⁵ Maryland Workshop for the Blind, First Annual Report, p. 15.

weaving and other handicraft. In his annual report for that year the Superintendent stated that the purpose was not to make the shops an Asylum, but a place of work to which men could go and earn enough to provide themselves with homes and get constant employment at fairly remunerative wages. He explained the failure of some workmen on the following grounds: "There are of course many incompetent persons among the blind, persons who would be objects of Charity even if they were not deprived of sight. They can't earn enough in the shops to maintain themselves."⁶ In 1875 the shops were not doing so well and they were moved to less expensive quarters at 130 North Howard Street. During that year the total sales from manufactured goods was \$6,886.10, of which five-sixths was from the Broom Shop.⁷ The shops however failed to be a success, due to the fact that the eligible adult blind did not apply for work. The blind beggars preferred to beg, rather than accept employment, and a committee from the school requested the authorities to take action to prevent their soliciting, and to force them to work towards their self-support. No action was taken and four years later operations at the shop were suspended. The Superintendent gave the following reasons for the failure of the shops:

We have experienced two great obstacles to the success of the shop; the encouragement given by the community to those blind persons who are professional beggars and who openly boast that they can make more money in three days than our honest, industrious mechanics can earn in six, and the lack of encouragement given to the latter who are anxious and willing

⁶ Maryland Institution for the Instruction of the Blind, Twelfth Report, p. 10

⁷ Maryland Workshop for the Blind, First Annual Report, p. 15.

The Maryland Institution for the Instruction of the Blind then started a shop building on the school grounds, which was completed in 1878.⁹ Broom, mattress and chair-caning shops were prepared to fill orders promptly and satisfactorily. A department for tuning and repairing organs and pianos, and a girls work room were also included in the shops,¹⁰ which were principally for pupils, but a few adult blind were allowed to continue working there. In 1879 the Broom Shop employed eleven pupils and five blind men from outside. Six pupils skilled in piano tuning were ready to try it as a means of livelihood. During that year 2,400 dozen brooms were made and sold.¹¹ The shops ran at a loss, but since they were but one type of school room, they were not expected to be self-supporting. From January through June 1881, the shops spent in salaries and materials \$3,110.25. The total expenditures for the last twelve months showed a deficit of \$623.96 over what they had received in cash sales. Four adult men then employed at fair wages supported their families from this income.¹²

⁹ Maryland Institution for the Instruction of the Blind, Forty-first Report, p. 64. A bequest of Mr. Alexander Loran furnished the means for the completion of the shops.

¹⁰ Maryland Institution for the Instruction of the Blind, Sixteenth Report, p. 6.

¹¹ Maryland Institution for the Instruction of the Blind, Seventeenth Report, pp. 9 and 10.

¹² Maryland Institution for the Instruction of the Blind, Nineteenth Report, p. 6.

An interesting light is thrown on the employment situation of the blind by Dr. T. R. Armitage of London, who visited the American Institutions for the Blind in 1884. In reporting on the Maryland Institution for the Instruction of the Blind he stated:

All the boys learn chair caning, at which if clever, they can earn, after they leave, sixteen dollars a week. It is found that the best trade after leaving is broom making; very few however rely entirely upon their trade. They find it more profitable to peddle or to become small manufacturers. Thus an old pupil employs seven seeing men at broom-making. He also has a tan-yard and has bought a small farm. Mattresses are made at the institution, but only to order. There are seven pianos. Only five tuners have established themselves and are doing well.¹³

The school continued to emphasize the fact that the shops were for the purpose of training pupils, in order that they might be better able to provide for themselves in private employment later on. Piano tuning was one very profitable means of earning a livelihood, and the number taking that course of study in the shops gradually increased.¹⁴ Mr. Morrison, the Superintendent of the school, felt that the employment of the adult blind should be completely apart from the school, and he constantly worked toward re-establishing a separate unit for them. In his annual report in 1899 he said:

I do not consider the employment of the adult blind an important feature of our school, and would not continue it,¹⁵ if it were not necessary for us to teach our pupils trades.

At that time there were eight or nine men employed in the broom

¹³ T. R. Armitage, M.D., The Education and Employment of the Blind (London: Harrison and Sons, 1885), pp. 139-90.

¹⁴ Maryland Institution for the Instruction of the Blind, Twenty-first Report, p. 11

¹⁵ Maryland School for the Blind, Thirty-seventh Report, p. 9.

shop, earning \$4-\$5 weekly, and thus partially supporting themselves in their own homes.

During these years interest in the adult blind began to grow throughout the country, and states were patterning their plans along the ideas of the Perkins Institution and the Massachusetts School for the Blind, which had had a successful workshop for adults in operation since 1841. Home teaching of adults started there in 1900 as a part of the school extension system.¹⁶ In 1905 the superintendent of the Maryland School made a study of the question of employment for the adult blind, and published his findings and recommendations in the Annual School Report. His recommendations for a separate workshop and sales room for the adults were summarized as follows:

I advocate the establishment and amplification of a workshop and distributing center for the adult blind, the establishment of a department for blind women in some existing charitable home, and the establishment of a system of educating the blind in their homes similar to the one in force in Massachusetts. But no matter what is done, no part of the work for the adult blind should be joined in any way to the school work for blind children. There is no connection between the two, and only harm to the already established work will result from any effort to bring them together.¹⁷

Commission to Investigate the Condition of the Adult Blind

The Board of Directors appealed to the Legislature to study the problem of the adult blind throughout the State, and in 1906 they passed "An Act to provide for the appointment of a Com-

¹⁶ Maryland Workshop for the Blind, First Annual Report, pp. 16-17.

¹⁷ Maryland School for the Blind, Forty-second Report, Appendix.

mission to investigate the condition of the Adult Blind in the State of Maryland, and to report on the expediency of the establishment by the State of institutions for them, and making appropriations for the necessary expenses of said Commission, and assistance for certain classes of blind people pending said report."¹⁸ The act gave the Governor authority to appoint a commission of five persons to serve without pay,¹⁹ whose duty it was to secure and record a complete list of all blind persons in the State, giving their name, age, financial condition, cause of blindness, and capacity for educational and industrial training.²⁰ The commission was given authority to assist any of the adult blind whom they considered worthy, in finding employment, to furnish materials and tools not exceeding \$50 worth, per person; and to place in homes indigent worthy blind women who had no other means of support, at a cost not exceeding \$200 per year.²¹ An annual appropriation of \$1,800.00 for 1907 and 1908 was made for carrying out the act.²²

The Commission began to function immediately, dividing its program into Work of Assistance and Work of Investigation, the

¹⁸ Laws of Maryland, c. 290.

¹⁹ Governor Warfield appointed Charles W. Ely, George C. Morrison, Waldo Newcomer, Jesse Robinson and George W. Connors, as the Commission. Mr. Ely, who had been in charge of the State education for the deaf and dumb, was elected chairman. Mr. Morrison was the Superintendent of the Maryland School for the Blind; Mr. Robinson, a blind farmer, and Mr. Waldo Newcomer, a member of the Board of the Maryland Institution: Report of the Commission to Investigate the Condition of the Adult Blind, p. 2.

²⁰ Laws of Maryland, 1906, c. 290, sec. 2.

²¹ Ibid., sec. 3.

²² Ibid., sec. 4.

latter being subdivided into a census of the blind, and measures for ameliorating the condition of the adult blind. They sent out 3,000 letters to ministers, county commissioners, almshouses, and members of the Legislature, requesting information about the blind in the State. Mr. Conner personally canvassed the Eastern Shore. In this way 675 cases of blindness were located.²³ As 123 of them were children, they were excluded from the study, leaving 342 adult blind in the counties and 210 in Baltimore City. Of this number 332 were males and 220 females, of whom 368 were white, 131 colored, and 33 no color given. They were further listed according to age, degree of blindness, and ability to self support. The Commission drew five general conclusions from this census: (1) That 50 per cent (255) of the total number were within the age of greatest usefulness (17-50 years). (2) One-fourth of the total were partially or wholly self-supporting. (3) Those least likely to be discovered were the aged, so that the percentage of partially self-supporting would be decreased if the total were more accurate. (4) The blind were in general poor, and had as their nearest relative persons unable to help them. (5) The greatest difficulty of the employed blind was the expense of marketing products, as it was impossible for them to travel alone and sell their wares.²⁴ The Commission made a thorough study of measures for ameliorating the condition of the adult blind throughout the United States, and found that they fell under one or more of the

²³ Report of the Commission to Investigate the Condition of the Adult Blind in the State of Maryland, p. 3.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 6.

following headings: (1) Alms-giving, pure and simple, (2) School extension work, (3) Establishment of Industrial Institutions with or without home teaching.²⁵ They analyzed each of these measures and reported on the various state programs for each, to show the good and poor qualities of the different ones.

In their Work of Assistance, the Commission aided three blind men in purchasing tools, contributed to the support of seven blind women. They found that they could have assisted more individuals but it did not seem advisable at the time.²⁶

From this complete study the Commission gathered that a Workshop for the adult blind with home extension service was the best plan, and they therefore drew up recommendations in the form of two bills to be presented to the Legislature. They requested that \$1,500 a year be allocated to the Maryland School for the Blind to assist in home teaching of adults, and that \$10,000 a year be appropriated for the establishment and maintenance of a separate workshop and salesroom for the adult blind.²⁷ The Legislature was not in favor of the home teaching bill, but they did accept the recommendation regarding the workshop.

Maryland Workshop for the Blind Established

On April 8, 1908, an "Act to Establish a Workshop for the Employment of Blind Men and Women and Making an Appropriation therefor,"²⁸ was passed. The Act provided for the maintenance of a workshop for the blind in Baltimore,²⁹ under the control of a

²⁵ Ibid., p. 7.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 3.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 16.

²⁸ Laws of Maryland, 1908, c. 566.

²⁹ Ibid., sec. 1.

Board of five trustees, three of whom were appointed by the Governor and two by the Directors of the Maryland School for the Blind.³⁰ The institution was incorporated as "The Maryland Workshop for the Blind," and the Board was given power to acquire and hold property, elect officers, and hire necessary employees. The workshop was authorized to be opened for work to all blind residents of the State over eighteen years of age, giving satisfactory proof of character and ability.³¹ The Board was also given authority to acquire suitable quarters in the city and to establish, maintain and direct the entire workshop.³² Five thousand dollars was appropriated annually for these purposes for 1908 and 1910.³³

The Board of Directors³⁴ was appointed in 1908, and the next year they selected the superintendent of the Maryland School for the Blind,³⁵ as superintendent of the Workshop, and authorized him to rent quarters and begin work. A house at 214 West Saratoga Street was rented, and formally opened on December 17, 1909.³⁶

³⁰ Ibid., sec. 2.

³¹ Ibid., sec. 3.

³² Ibid., sec. 4.

³³ Ibid., sec. 5.

³⁴ "Messrs. John R. Cary and J. Walter Oster were appointed by the Maryland School for the Blind, and Dr. Arthur S. Barrett and Messrs. James T. O'Neill and Bennett Steele by His Excellency, Governor Crothers," First Annual Report, Maryland Workshop for the Blind, p. 20.

³⁵ John P. Bledsoe became Superintendent of the Maryland School for the Blind in May of 1906, and he continues in that capacity today. The new school in Overlea and the progressive methods of housing and instructing the pupils there stand as a tribute to his efforts on behalf of the blind. See chap. 11.

³⁶ Maryland Workshop for the Blind, First Annual Report, p. 21.

During the following year the need for larger quarters made it necessary to move, and the superintendent purchased property at 501 West Payette Street.³⁷ A campaign which was started to raise money to pay off the mortgage and equip the new building, became known as the "Adult Blind Movement." Ten thousand dollars was spent in putting the property in first-class condition, and the Workshop began operating in the new quarters in August of 1910.³⁸ The Adult Blind Movement had raised over \$40,000 by the end of 1911, and the next year three new stories were added to the rear of the Workshops, to meet the growing need for space.³⁹ In 1912 the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore appropriated \$5,000 annually to aid in the maintenance of the Workshop.⁴⁰ The same year the Director asked the Legislature for \$20,000 to complete the equipment of the buildings,⁴¹ and an Act was passed appropriating \$10,000 annually for 1913 and 1914.⁴² The Workshop was well equipped and provided work for a number of persons, and the Adult Blind Movement continued to collect funds for maintenance purposes. The State of Maryland and Baltimore City contributed \$35,000 towards maintenance during the years 1916 and 1917, but this amount was inadequate to meet the needs of the shop.⁴³ The

³⁷ Ibid., p. 22.

³⁸ Maryland Workshop for the Blind, Third Report, p. 12.

³⁹ Maryland School for the Blind, Biennial Report, p. 12.

⁴⁰ Laws of Maryland, 1912, c. 71, p. 125.

⁴¹ Maryland Workshop for the Blind, Third Report, p. 14

⁴² Laws of Maryland, 1912, c. 93, p. 177.

⁴³ Maryland Workshop for the Blind, Fifth Report, p. 11.

number of applicants had increased, teachers did not want to remain on at the low salaries paid, the wages which averaged \$3.00 a week to the employees were entirely out of keeping with the times, and there was need for more extensive home teaching. In 1917 Mr. Waldo Newcomer, director of the campaign, appealed to the citizens of the State for \$100,000.00 in contributions to meet the increased demands.⁴⁴ The Legislature had increased its appropriations to \$12,500 for each of the years 1917 and 1918,⁴⁵ and at the next Assembly \$14,000 was appropriated annually for 1919 and 1920.⁴⁶

In 1920 a fire completely destroyed the Workshop at Paca and Fayette Streets and it was necessary to purchase new property. The insurance of \$65,000 helped to buy the Old Morgan College at Fulton and Edmondson Avenues, where the Workshop is today. This is a large stone building, consisting of three stories and a basement. A broom shop, built of brick was added, and operated by the Maryland School for the Blind. The School now owns all of the Workshop property, which they allow the Workshop to use free of charge.⁴⁷

In 1929 an Act was passed by the General Assembly, which provided for the re-education and relief of blind persons over eighteen years of age in the Maryland Workshop for the Blind.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 9. The actual salaries or qualifications of the teachers was not stipulated.

⁴⁵ Laws of Maryland, 1916, c. 223, sec. 103, p. 453.

⁴⁶ Laws of Maryland, 1918, c. 206, p. 553.

⁴⁷ Statement, John F. Bledsoe, op. cit.

⁴⁸ Laws of Maryland, 1929, c. 271.

The law allowed the Workshop to supervise and care for such blind persons at a cost not exceeding \$250.00 per year.⁴⁹ This law was administered by the Workshop through educating persons at the establishment and maintaining them in their homes, until it was superseded by legislation in conformity with the Social Security Act in 1936,⁵⁰ which turned over the assistance program to the State Department of Public Welfare. This function of the Workshop will be dealt with under "Assistance to the Blind," in Chapter V.

The changes in amounts of State appropriations can be clearly seen in the following table, the appropriation being at its peak during the time the Workshop administered relief to the blind. These appropriations are exclusive of those for relief, which will be found in Chapter V.

TABLE 5

STATE APPROPRIATIONS TO MARYLAND WORKSHOP
FOR THE BLIND, SHOWING AMOUNTS AND YEAR
APPROPRIATION WAS INCREASED, AS COM-
PILED FROM LAWS OF MARYLAND

Year	Appropriation
1909	\$ 5,000
1911	10,000
1915	12,000
1917	12,500
1919	14,000
1921	17,000
1923	20,000
1938	18,000
1939	15,000

At the present time the Workshop is maintained by a \$15,000 yearly

⁴⁹ Ibid., sec. 16.

⁵⁰ Laws of Maryland, 1936, c. 145, "Public Assistance to the Needy Blind."

appropriation from the State,⁵¹ and nearly \$10,000 a year from contributions, legacies and investments.⁵² Table 6 gives a picture of itemized income and expenditures over a ten-year period, exclusive of blind relief or expenditures. The general decline in receipts is due in part to the fact that Baltimore City discontinued its yearly appropriation, and private donations dwindled considerably.

TABLE 6

INCOME AND EXPENDITURES OF MARYLAND WORKSHOP FOR THE BLIND
FOR ALTERNATE FISCAL YEARS AS COMPILED FROM PERMANENT
REPORTS OF BOARD OF STATE AID AND CHARITIES

Year	1920-1921	1922-1923	1925-1926 ^a	1927-1928	1929-1930
Income					
Total	\$70,708.41	\$69,037.09	\$65,511.82	\$59,826.04	\$50,463.70
State	17,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00
City	6,500.00	8,000.00	8,000.00	.....	.....
Sales	11,345.12	29,930.41	33,173.82	29,120.95	27,929.47
Donations	29,376.09	1,826.00	1,581.94	1,573.86	214.71
Other	6,487.20	9,430.68	2,731.06	10,125.33	1,324.52
Disbursements					
Total	\$75,500.91	\$68,460.29	\$72,747.49	\$68,862.65	\$50,545.30
Salaries and wages	64,248.79	53,936.23	54,060.80	51,535.10	33,401.42
Other	11,252.12	15,492.06	18,686.69	17,347.55	17,444.33

^aDue to change in date of reports, this period is not in conformity with the preceding ones.

⁵¹Laws of Maryland.

⁵²

Letter from William B. Hatchford, Superintendent, Maryland Workshop for the Blind, July 7, 1940.



The Workshop program has always been under the supervision of the Board of State Aid and Charities which recommends to the Legislature the amount of yearly appropriation it deems necessary for the maintenance of the Workshop.⁵³

Workshop Program

When the Workshop first opened in 1902, the program consisted of training and employing blind adults at the shop and in their homes and this plan of procedure has continued up to the present time. Mr. George W. Conner was made manager, and six teachers and a salesroom clerk were employed the first year.

The Home Teaching work began in September of 1905 as a supplement to the work of the Commission to Investigate the Condition of the Adult Blind. A teacher from the Maryland School for the Blind began devoting one-half of her time to the school extension work in September. The nature of the work was shown in the teacher's report to the Commission the next year.

I visited 52 homes, 654 times; instructed 30 persons (20 males, 10 females); 15 of whom learned to read B.V. point, 6 to cane, 6 to do net work, 3 to knit, and 2 to crochet, 10 learned to write B.V. point, and 5 to write with a pencil.⁵⁴

Because it was felt that this was a valuable undertaking, it was continued as part of the Workshop's function, even though the Legislature failed to appropriate the requested funds for maintaining it.⁵⁵ The Superintendent felt that home teaching was a great

⁵³ See above, p. 30.

⁵⁴ Maryland School for the Blind, Biennial Report (Forty-third and Forty-fourth), p. 23

⁵⁵ See above, p. 47.

been to many persons, and also a means of preparing some of them for employment at the shops. In his first report he expresses these values of the Workshop:

Men who sat in their homes despondent, helpless and hopeless, (were) lifted from these depths of despair, and by careful training (were) made self supporting, independent and happy citizens of our commonwealth.⁵⁶

By 1911 one teacher was employed full-time at home teaching, and was assisted part-time by two of the teachers of the Workshop. During that year 100 blind men and women were instructed in their homes.⁵⁷ By 1917 this branch of the work required the services of three full-time teachers.⁵⁸ The demand for home teaching has varied from time to time and at the present time the five teachers in the Workshop, of whom two are colored and three white, give part of their time to home teaching. For many years this has included visits to the blind men and women at the Baltimore City Hospitals Infirmary.

In the Workshop instruction was given in fancy work, weaving, mattress making and caning, point reading and writing, tuning and cordwork, broom making, and industrial arts for women.⁵⁹ The Industrial Arts included operation of telephone switchboards, and making of bean bags and artificial flowers. These courses have been altered to keep pace with the changing demands. Broom making was the outstanding industry in the beginning, bringing in

⁵⁶ Maryland School for the Blind, First Report, p. 10

⁵⁷ Maryland School for the Blind, Biennial Report 1904-7, p. 20.

⁵⁸ Maryland Workshop for the Blind, Fifth Annual Report.

⁵⁹ Maryland Workshop for the Blind, Third Annual Report, p. 14.

\$5,648 cash receipts the first year.⁶⁰ The competition of low priced machine-made brooms and other products decreased the demand somewhat, and in 1924 the State came to the aid of the blind industries by passing a Resolution in their favor.⁶¹ This authorized and requested the Central Purchasing Bureau, in purchasing products of a kind made by the Workshop, to purchase them from the Workshop, even though the price was higher than the market price. This is still in effect. With the increase in radios, there was less and less need for piano tuning, and radio repair work is now replacing it. Switchboard operation is still being taught, and telephone repair work has been added to it. Weaving and handiwork continue to be valuable, and reading and writing of Braille is still an essential subject. One of the oldest, and by far the steadiest industry has been chair caning, but in the past few years this too has been decreasing. In this department there are five deaf mutes employed to perform the initial steaming process for removing the old cane, and the final process of refinishing the newly cased chairs. Several entirely new projects have come into being in recent years. Among them are the making of mops and pillow cases, and instruction in running newstands.⁶²

A Federal Statute Bill, passed in 1936,⁶³ provided free

⁶⁰ Maryland Workshop for the Blind, First Annual Report, p. 10.

⁶¹ Laws of Maryland, 1924, Joint Resolution No. 16, p. 1521.

⁶² Statement, Ida McA. Beck, Maryland Workshop for the Blind, personal interview, May 1940.

⁶³ Public No. 732 H.R. 4688.

space in Federal buildings, in which the blind persons could establish newsstands. In support of this Act the Maryland Workshop has provided the necessary equipment and established seven blind men in Post Offices and other Federal buildings in Baltimore City. Another federally-aided project, employing women, has been started recently. The Federal Government has made a contract for large numbers of pillow cases with the National Industries for the Blind, which in turn sub-lets them to the Workshops throughout the country. During the year 1943 the Maryland Workshop was able to give full-time employment, on a piece work basis, to fifteen blind and partially blind girls, from January through May.

The Workshop has aided blind persons in taking advanced courses in law, physiotherapy, singing and music, and has helped them in establishing independent trades.⁶⁴ Both the Superintendent and his assistant carry on the work of placing and adjusting these individuals in the community.

The Maryland Workshop originated the White Cane movement in Maryland about 1930, which now provides about 100 white canes per year to blind individuals. The canes are an aid in walking, and the color, which identifies the blind person, helps them in traffic.⁶⁵

Enrollees in the Program

When the Workshop first opened in November of 1909, there

⁶⁴ Maryland Workshop for the Blind, Hands That See (Baltimore: Thomsen-Hillis Company, 1937), p. 20.

⁶⁵ Statement, Ida Mel. Beck, op. cit.

were fourteen persons enrolled,⁶⁶ besides the thirty persons to whom home instruction had been given.⁶⁷ By the end of the first year 150 blind men and women in the State had received employment or training in one of these ways. They were paid \$9,881.24 in wages, of which \$5,643.14 came from their own production of brooms, and the balance from State appropriations.⁶⁸ The number instructed and employed increased to 122 by 1911, and 177 by 1913.⁶⁹ This latter figure remained almost constant during the next four years. The number has varied with the change in demand for products, and the interests of the blind, as is shown in Table 7. The large increase after 1936 came with the expansion of the Home Teaching program, which followed the transfer of relief administration from the Workshop to the Local Boards. The larger percentage of enrollees since that time have been in the Home Extension group. The workers at the shops, and those who have established themselves on the outside, are able to support themselves in whole or in part from their work. Those operating newsstands average between \$20 and \$25 weekly, and the girls employed on the Government pillow case contract earned about \$15 a week.

⁶⁶ Maryland Workshop for the Blind, First Annual Report.

⁶⁷ See above, p.

⁶⁸ Maryland Workshop for the Blind, First Annual Report,
p. 10.

⁶⁹ Maryland Workshop for the Blind, Third Annual Report,
p. 5.

TABLE 7

ENROLLMENT AT THE MARYLAND WORKSHOP FOR THE BLIND,
INCLUDING PERSONS UNDER HOME EXTENSION COURSE,
FOR VARIOUS YEARS FROM 1918 TO 1938, AS RE-
CORDED IN THE ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE MARY-
LAND WORKSHOP AND THE BIENNIAL
REPORTS OF THE BOARD OF STATE
AID AND CHARITIES

Years ^a	Number Enrolled
10/1/18 to 9/30/19	192
10/1/20 to 9/30/21	187
10/1/22 to 9/30/23	131
10/1/25 to 9/30/26 , ,	117
10/1/27 to 9/30/28	120
10/1/29 to 9/30/30	223
10/1/31 to 9/30/32	341
10/1/33 to 9/30/34	336
10/1/35 to 9-30-36	b
10/1/36 to 9/30/37	633
10/1/37 to 9/30/38	649

^aThe enrollment figures available in the
Biennial Reports are listed for only one of the
two years.

^bNo record can be found of the number
enrolled during this period.

The employees at the Workshop are both white and colored
and come from Baltimore City and the different counties. Those
from the counties reside at the Margaret Sawyer Home, which is
located only a few doors away from the Workshop. This home re-
ceives support from private contributions and is affiliated with
the Workshop. It boards ^{blind}women at \$5.00 a week, and has a capacity
of ten. The male county residents usually board in approved
boarding homes in the neighborhood of the Workshops, for
\$6.00 weekly.⁷⁰

⁷⁰Statement of Ida McA. Beck, op. cit.

The Associated Blind Men of Maryland, and Associated Blind Women of Maryland are affiliated with the Workshop. These societies were established by the Blind in 1909, to further the interest of the blind and to be of mutual benefit to each other, and they are supported by small membership dues and special benefits to raise money.⁷¹ The Workshop is also affiliated with the Maryland Association of Workers for the Blind, and the Maryland School for the Blind.

One of the greatest handicaps to the work with the blind has been the public solicitation carried on by unauthentic societies. The Maryland Workshop for the Blind does not use these methods, their purpose being to broaden the scope of the work for the blind and to help them rehabilitate themselves. This purpose is clearly and freely stated by the Superintendent of the Workshop in a brochure published by the Workshop in 1937, and it seems a fitting summary for the chapter:

The purposes of the Maryland Workshop for the Blind are to furnish employment in our workshop to as many Adult Blind as the amount of work received will warrant; to conduct our workshop for the employment and instruction of the Adult Blind, and not for profit, and to recognize neither color, caste nor creed; to instruct the sightless in the various types of industrial and handicraft work, in their homes as well as in our workshop; to carry out the various projects presented from time to time in the interests of the blind; to help in the education of the blind in professional fields; to rehabilitate the newly blinded in order that they may readjust and fit themselves for useful service in their new circumstances; to help in sight conservation and prevention of blindness work; to carry on placement work wherever opportunities prevail; and to maintain a staff of blind or partially blind Home Teachers

⁷¹Directory of Activities of the Blind in U. S. and Canada (New York: American Foundation for the Blind, 1926) pp.77-78.

to instruct the sightless in their homes and help with their problems.⁷²

⁷²Maryland Workshop for the Blind, Hands That See, op. cit., p. 1.

CHAPTER IV

SIGHT CONSERVATION AND THE PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS

Early Preventive Measures

The general Welfare Program for the Blind, aside from the educational provisions already discussed, consisted of prevention of blindness which will be discussed here, and direct care which will be dealt with in the next chapter.

The first interest in preventative work with the blind in Maryland was instigated by a Baltimore physician, Dr. Hiram Woods, who read a paper on the ravages of ophthalmia neonatorum before the State Medical Society in 1892.¹ Prior to this the Maryland School for the Blind had kept statistics on the causes of blindness of its pupils, and it was found that ophthalmia neonatorum was responsible for the largest percentage of blindness.² Following the presentation of Dr. Wood's paper, a committee was organized to propose legislation for prevention. On April 6, 1894, a bill which had been presented to the Legislature was passed and

¹Maryland Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Report 1926-1929, p.1. Dr. Woods became associated with the Committee for the Prevention of Blindness, which is now the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, in New York City, and also served as an officer on the Board of the Maryland Society for the Prevention of Blindness.

²Maryland School for the Blind, Twenty-first Report, p. 14.

entitled "An Act to Prevent Blindness in Infants."³ This law made it mandatory for midwives, nurses or persons in charge of infants (other than a qualified physician) to report any cases of sore, red or inflamed eyes of infants to a physician or the health commission at once, and to refrain from applying any remedy.⁴ Violation of the Act was made punishable by a fine, not exceeding \$100.00, or imprisonment of six months, or both.⁵ Following the passage of the law eight midwives were convicted and prosecuted and the general use of eye prophylactic was started in the obstetrical division of all hospitals.⁶ Public interest in this preventable disease found impetus in the investigation of cause and extent, made by various organizations, and the findings were presented to the Legislature for review. In 1908 the Mothers' Relief Society of Baltimore studied the causes of blindness among pupils at the Maryland School for the Blind, and found that 29 per cent of blindness was due to ophthalmia neonatorum, and 71 per cent of this was traceable to the practices of midwives.⁷ Since 1914 the City and State Health Departments have been distributing free prophylactic drops to doctors and midwives for use in the eyes of every new-born baby.⁸

³Laws of Maryland, 1894, c. 511.

⁴Ibid., sec. 1.

⁵Ibid., sec. 2.

⁶Maryland Society for the Prevention of Blindness, op. cit., p. 1.

⁷Ibid.

⁸John Williams Avirett, "Sight Conservation in Maryland," p. 8. Reprinted from The Daily Record, Baltimore, Maryland, February 4, 1936.

Maryland Society for the Prevention of Blindness

The next step towards prevention came in 1909, when the Maryland Society for the Prevention of Blindness was organized as a non-stock corporation,⁹ naming as its objectives "to learn, teach and enforce all possible means for the prevention of blindness in the State of Maryland; to educate the general public in the use of these means; to help in their enforcement and to co-operate with other organizations for the furtherance of these ends."¹⁰ The Society influenced the Legislature in 1910 to pass an Act to provide for the registration and licensing of midwives in the State of Maryland,¹¹ which also regulated the educational qualifications for persons practicing as midwives.

During the next ten years the Society became inactive due to the inability of the Secretary to continue the work, and re-organization was commenced in 1926. On March 1, 1927, the Society opened offices in the Morris Building, with a full-time paid executive Secretary, who continues in that capacity today. The Society had been financed by private subscription until it applied for and was admitted to membership in the Community Fund of Balti-

⁹The Society had its first meeting at the home of the Secretary, Mrs. Joseph Colt Bloodgood, on May 26, 1909, and elected the Honorable Charles J. Bonaparte as its first President. The Board of Directors has been composed of eminent eye specialists, Public Health and School authorities, and outstanding laymen interested in civic and welfare matters.

¹⁰ The Maryland Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Survey and Report, 1939-1940.

¹¹ Laws of Maryland, 1910, c. 722, p. 145.

more on January 1, 1929.¹² In 1937 the Society moved to its present quarters at 1078 Standard Oil Building.¹³

Finances

The Community Fund contributed \$2,633.57 to the Society during the first year of its membership. The money was allotted monthly and the society in turn gave monthly accounts to the Fund. This amount has varied from year to year, and in 1937 the annual allotment, which had increased to \$3,500.00, was supplemented by a special allotment of \$675.00.¹⁴ This enabled the Society to secure the services of a secretarial assistant to the Executive Secretary. During the year 1939 the Society received \$4,910.60 from the Community Fund.¹⁵ It also received generous private contributions, and several bequests, with which it hopes to start an endowment fund. Table 8 shows the Society's income and expenditures for the past three years, as recorded in their annual reports.

¹²The Maryland Society for the Prevention of Blindness, op. cit., p. 2.

¹³The Maryland Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Survey and Report--Year 1937.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Maryland Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Survey and Report--Year 1939.

TABLE 8

RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS OF MARYLAND SOCIETY FOR THE
PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS FOR THE THREE YEARS, 1937,
1938 AND 1939, AS GIVEN IN THEIR ANNUAL
REPORTS FOR THOSE YEARS

Items	1937	1938	1939
Income			
Total	\$4,766.32	\$14,478.74	\$15,080.40
Balance on hand	23.52	530.35	9,790.44
Community Fund	3,500.00	4,458.60	4,910.60
Community Fund, special allotment	675.00	142.00	555.55
Refunds and reimbursements.....	.....	84.74	201.70
Special gifts and membership...	567.80	2,263.05	177.75
Expenditures			
Total	\$4,164.66	\$4,688.30	\$5,516.03
National dues	10.00	10.00	10.00
Medical expenses	349.13	800.13	1,035.25
Salaries	2,447.50	2,803.50	2,280.00
Educational supplies.....	393.70	249.33	179.31
Other	964.33	825.46	1,411.47

One of the largest annual contributions to the Society is from the Lions Club of Baltimore. This is a business men's organization which started in 1922 as a member of the National Lions Club with the purpose of promoting the prevention of blindness. They raise money through sponsoring public entertainments, and this is turned over to the Maryland Society for the Prevention of Blindness to be spent as it sees fit. The greatest por-

tion of their fund is used to purchase glasses for children.¹⁶ Several other private organizations have also purchased glasses for persons financially unable to secure them. The Society's income since its reorganization has increased from \$6,936.23 for the three years ending October 15, 1929,¹⁷ to \$15,030.40 for the year 1939.¹⁸

Functions

One of the most important parts of the program of the Maryland Society for the Prevention of Blindness is its educational phase. The general public is reached through lectures to clubs and organizations; exhibits at Conferences, Fairs, Department Stores, and School; radio addresses, moving pictures and distribution of pamphlets. It is estimated that between 10,000 and 20,000 people are reached yearly through these mediums.¹⁹ Educational activities emphasize the importance of pre-natal care of expectant mothers and the examining and testing of pre-school children, the necessity of proper lighting, and the threat of accidents and disease.

Another phase of the work is actual assistance, given in medical eye care. Over 600 persons referred through public and

¹⁶ Maryland Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Survey and Report--Year 1937.

¹⁷ Maryland Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Survey and Report--Year 1926-29.

¹⁸ Maryland Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Survey and Report--Year 1939.

¹⁹ Maryland Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Survey and Report--Year 1937.

private agencies, and by individuals, have been given clinical or hospital care yearly. Practically every hospital in Baltimore, and many charitable physicians, oculists and dentists have co-operated in this work, by making eye examinations, doing operations, furnishing dental care, and treating diseases causing eye disorders. The necessary corrective supplies including glasses, are supplied through the Maryland Society.²⁰

The Society also takes an active part in promoting legislation aimed to conserve sight and prevent blindness. In 1935 the President and members of the Society sponsored the Safety Glass Bill which requires the use of safety glass in automobiles manufactured or assembled after July 1, 1935.²¹ That same year they prepared a Fireworks Bill prohibiting the promiscuous use and sale of fireworks and other destructive instruments, to children.²² This bill has received great public support since its introduction, but after being passed by the House at the Legislature, it was killed by the Senate and failed to become a law.²³ The Society plans to continue its efforts with the 1941 Legislature.²⁴ A Baltimore City Ordinance prohibiting the sale and use of air rifles and B.B. guns in the City was sponsored by the Society, and

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Laws of Maryland, 1935, c. 323, p. 736.

²²Maryland Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Survey and Report--Years 1939-40.

²³Maryland Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Survey and Report--Years 1939-40.

²⁴Maryland Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Survey and Report--1939-40.

passed in 1936.²⁵

The Maryland Society for the Prevention of Blindness has worked toward the conservation of sight through educating the public to eye hygiene, precautions for industrial hazards, and the value of proper illumination. The Illuminating Engineers Club has supported the latter, through furnishing slides on the effects of improper lighting, and in co-operating with the City Health Department in making a survey regarding illumination.²⁶ The Society also assisted in a very material way in the establishment of Sight-Saving Classes in Baltimore.

Sight-Conservation Classes

Following the lead of other cities in the United States, Baltimoreans became aware of the need for a special class for children with defective vision, who could not adjust themselves in the average school room, yet were not so blind as to warrant admittance to the Maryland School for the Blind. Other cities had established what were commonly called "sight-saving classes," to provide the visually handicapped with the same type of education offered to other children, and at the same time to preserve their defective sight. The City Health Department, and the Board of Education co-operated in establishing the first sight-conservation class in Public School No. 93 in 1926.²⁷

²⁵ Baltimore City Code, Ordinance No. 104.

²⁶ Maryland Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Survey and Report--Year 1933.

²⁷ Benjamin Rones and Olive A. Whildin, "The Sight Conservation Classes of Baltimore City," Baltimore Bulletin of Education, XIII, No. 2, 32-33.

During the year 1926-27, the Maryland Society for the Prevention of Blindness went through the files of the Garrett Hospital and located 70 children which they thought would be eligible for such a class. Fourteen of these were entered in the sight-saving class, and there were ten colored, for whom no class was available.²⁸ In 1927 another class was opened at Public School No. 61. By 1928 there were 27 children enrolled in these classes.²⁹ By January 1932 there were five classes for white, and three for colored children in the Public Schools throughout the City,³⁰ and in two more years the classes had increased to ten, and the enrollment to 159 pupils.³¹ Since there are no Sight Conservation classes in the counties children from there who do not have sufficient sight to attend the public schools, are enrolled at the Maryland School for the Blind. There is need for these kinds of classes in the counties, but up to the present, none have been established.

Pupils or pre-school children who are detected showing symptoms of defective vision, are referred to an eye clinic or a private physician for examination. Those children falling within the requirements for certification are admitted to the sight-saving classes. In these classes, all of the work is done in a specially

²⁸ Maryland Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Survey and Report--Year 1926-29.

²⁹ Bones and Whildin, op. cit., p. 34.

³⁰ Maryland Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Survey and Report--Year 1932.

³¹ Bones and Whildin, op. cit., p. 34.

equipped room, with proper lighting, and dull finished surfaces, and the printed work is in enlarged type. This child's vision is retested at intervals and if it improves, he is returned to the regular classes. Vocational guidance is also given, to aid the students in selecting the vocation best suited to their eye condition.³²

The Society for the Prevention of Blindness, with the co-operation of the State Departments of Health and Education, is carrying its program to all parts of the state in an effort to prevent blindness and conserve the sight of all. The Maryland Society is recognized by and co-operates with the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness.

³²Ibid., pp. 34-35.

CHAPTER V

ASSISTANCE TO THE BLIND

Provisions from 1929-1935

The United States Census for 1900 showed 983 blind persons in Maryland, 814 of whom were over twenty years of age. In 1910 the total number listed for Maryland was 902, and in 1920 there were 763.¹ A small percentage of those listed attended the School for the Blind, and after 1910 another group were dealt with through the Maryland Workshop but the larger number were adults who received no form of care. In 1929, Maryland recognized the need for financial assistance to the blind, to help them become rehabilitated through education and as a supplementation of their incomes, and a bill was presented to the legislature requesting this aid.

The bill, which became a law that same year, assigned to the Maryland Workshop for re-education and relief such blind or partially blind persons over eighteen years of age, who were residents of the state as were recommended by the County Commissioners and the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore.² The City or County was to pay \$250.00 per person to the Workshop for each adult blind

¹U. S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the U.S., No. 73 (Washington: Government Printing Office), p.31.

²Laws of Maryland, 1929, c. 271.

person committed to its care.³ In order to be eligible, a person had to be of good moral character, sane, and unable to provide himself with the necessities of life because of lack of sight. Persons soliciting alms were excluded.⁴ Citizenship was necessary, and residence in the state at the time of the passage of the act, or at the onset of blindness, or seven years prior to application, was also required.⁵ The procedure outlined provided for a written application, certification of need by two reputable residents, and a vision test by a physician who was chosen by the applicant. The Workshop was given the responsibility for determining eligibility and the extent of need, but was limited by maximum grants of \$250.00 per year to one person and a minimum of \$150.00 to anyone with a total income of less than \$300.00. This relief was to take the place of all other public relief, and no person was deemed a pauper by accepting it.⁶ Eligibility was to be redetermined yearly, and changes in grants made according to need.⁷ The Act provided for the appointment of trustees, when necessary, to supervise the expenditures of the blind person.⁸ The Workshop was authorized to spend such portion of any person's allowance, as deemed necessary, for medical or surgical treatment benefiting their eye condition.⁹ It also had to keep records of each recipient, and accounts of expenditures. A maximum grant of \$350.00 for man and wife was stipulated.¹⁰

During the first year the Workshop disbursed \$15,161.50

³Ibid., sec. 16

⁴Ibid., sec. 17.

⁵Ibid., sec. 18

⁶Ibid., sec. 19

⁷Ibid., sec. 20.

⁸Ibid., sec. 21.

⁹Ibid., sec. 22.

¹⁰Ibid., sec. 23

to the adult blind in accordance with this act.¹¹ This amount was almost tripled the next year, and continued to increase every year thereafter, until the administration of blind assistance was transferred to the Local Departments of Welfare in May of 1936. The following figures from the Annual Reports of the State Comptroller of the Treasury show the amounts spent yearly for blind relief during these years.

TABLE 9

AMOUNTS SPENT YEARLY FOR BLIND RELIEF DURING YEARS
1930-1936

Years	Amounts
10/1/29 to 9/30/30	\$18,161.80
10/1/30 to 9/30/31	43,384.11
10/1/31 to 9/30/32	53,246.03
10/1/32 to 9/30/33	64,792.99
10/1/33 to 9/30/34	88,925.14
10/1/34 to 9/30/35	77,653.72
10/1/35 to 4/1/36 ^a	50,839.01

^aAs of 4/1/36 the administration of blind relief was given to the local welfare boards.

During September, 1934, relief was administered to 375 persons, 239 of whom were in Baltimore City, and the balance of 137 were in the counties. Seven counties were not participating in the program.¹² On April 30, 1936, the total number of recipients had increased to 478, of which 308 were Baltimore City residents and 170 were county residents.¹³ Four counties still were not partic-

¹¹Report of the Comptroller of the Treasury of Maryland, Fiscal Year 1930, p. 14.

¹²Board of State Aid and Charities, Seventeenth Biennial Report, p. 53.

¹³Board of State Aid and Charities, Eighteenth Biennial Report, p. 54.

ipating. No record can be found of the average grant per person during these years.

On April 8, 1936, the Maryland Legislature passed an Act entitled "Public Assistance to the Needy Blind,"¹⁴ in conformity with the requirements of the Federal Social Security Act. To understand the reasons for a new law, it is necessary to know something of the requirements of the Federal Social Security Act passed in August of 1935.¹⁵

Social Security Act

Under Title X of the Social Security Act, entitled "Grants to States for Aid to the Blind," yearly sums were appropriated, whereby the Federal Government could grant to states with approved plans one-half of the amount (up to a Federal-State total of \$30.00 per recipient per month) which the states paid to the needy blind who were not residing in institutions nor receiving Old Age Assistance. To be approved, a state plan had to (1) be in effect in all the political subdivisions of the state, (2) be administered or supervised by a single state agency, (3) allow for state participation in financing the program, (4) provide for fair hearing of persons denied assistance, (5) use methods of administration recommended by the Social Security Board, and (6) submit reports to the Board. A plan would not be approved if its residence requirements excluded, because of residence, any person who had lived in the state for five out of the past nine years, nor if it

¹⁴Laws of Maryland, 1936, c. 146.

¹⁵U.S. Statutes, 1935, Vol. XLIX, Part I, p. 620.

excluded for citizenship reasons any citizens of the United States. The states received their grants quarterly, following the submission of estimates to the Board.¹⁶ In 1939, the Social Security Act was amended so that the government now pays 50 per cent of the amount of state grants, up to \$40.00.

Public Assistance to the Needy Blind in the State

The Maryland Law of 1929 was inadequate because it had not been in effect in all the political subdivisions of the state, had no provision for fair hearing, and the residence requirement was in excess of the federal standard. Since it was planned to have the public assistance of all the categories supervised by one state agency, the Board of State Aid and Charities, blind assistance was transferred to that Board. The new law was passed by the legislature on April 8, 1936, and the State Plan was approved by the Social Security Board on April 27, 1936.¹⁷ The plan provided for \$15,000 monthly to care for approximately 600 blind persons at an average cost of \$25.00 per month. No figures can be found to show the basis for determining the per capita grant.

The Act of 1936 repealed the former act granting relief to the needy blind, and substituted a state-wide system of public assistance to blind persons in need, to be administered by the Department of Public Welfare of Baltimore, and the county welfare boards, at the expense of the counties and City under the super-

¹⁶ Social Security Board, Third Annual Report (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1938), pp. 36-50.

¹⁷ Social Security Board, Bulletin No. 74, April, 1936.

vision of the Board of State Aid and Charities.¹⁸ To be eligible, a person must: (1) have met a residence requirement of five years out of the nine immediately preceding application, the last year of which had been continuous, or have lost his eyesight while a resident of the state; (2) have insufficient income or resources to provide a reasonable subsistence, compatible with decency and health; (3) not be an inmate of an institution; (4) not have made an assignment or transfer of property within five years preceding application; (5) not be in need of continual institutional care; (6) not solicit alms while receiving assistance; and (7) have no child or legally responsible person able to support him.¹⁹ A person receiving aid to the blind was ineligible for other forms of public relief, except temporary medical aid,²⁰ as the total amount of the grant was to be sufficient, when added to other resources, to meet reasonable needs not in excess of \$30.00 a month.²¹ Application for aid was to be made to the county welfare boards,²² which would investigate them²³ and determine eligibility and amount of assistance.²⁴ Provisions were made for appointment by the County Board of a guardian, to receive the grant and care for the beneficiary.²⁵ If the estate was unable to meet funeral expenses of a recipient, the county boards could pay those not exceeding \$100.00.²⁶ Assistance granted under this act was not assignable nor subject to execution, tax, attachment or garnish-

¹⁸Laws of Maryland, 1936, c. 145.

¹⁹Ibid., sec. 13.

²⁰Ibid., sec. 19.

²¹Ibid., sec. 20.

²²Ibid., sec. 21.

²³Ibid., sec. 22.

²⁴Ibid., sec. 23.

²⁵Ibid., sec. 24.

²⁶Ibid., sec. 25.

ment.²⁷ If at any time the recipient came into property, assistance could be discontinued, and recovered if the resources of the recipient allowed it.²⁸ All assistance granted could be allowed as a claim against the estate of a deceased recipient, but no action would be taken against real estate while it was occupied by the surviving spouse.²⁹ The county boards were to make periodic changes or revoke assistance as deemed necessary, provided all such changes were reported to the State Board,³⁰ and any person feeling that his application had not been fairly considered could appeal to the State Board and be given a hearing before it.³¹ Persons moving to another county in the state, with the approval of the State Board, could continue to receive assistance from the county to which they had moved.³²

In order to finance this program the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore, and the County Commissioners of each county were authorized and required to levy annually on the assessable property in the counties and City the sum of \$250.00 for the care of each recipient within its jurisdiction.³³ No fees were to be charged by anyone for aiding persons in any except criminal proceedings under the Act.³⁴ Persons obtaining or attempting to obtain aid through false representation, or persons abetting such acts, were subject to fine or imprisonment.³⁵ All applications and records were confidential and open only to persons of official

²⁷ Ibid., sec. 26.

²⁸ Ibid., sec. 29.

²⁹ Ibid., sec. 30.

³⁰ Ibid., sec. 28.

³¹ Ibid., sec. 27.

³² Ibid., sec. 31.

³³ Ibid., sec. 32.

³⁴ Ibid., sec. 33.

³⁵ Ibid., sec. 35.

capacity.³⁶

In November of 1936, the Social Security Board issued a definition of blindness, which Maryland put into use. A person was blind for the purposes of the act if his vision was less than 20/200. This meant that he could see only at twenty feet what the normal person could see at 200 feet. Diagnosis of degree of blindness had to be made in writing by a certified ophthalmologist, and approved by the State examining physician.³⁷

Several changes were made in the Maryland Act in 1937 and 1939. The amount of assistance was limited to a \$30.00 grant per month, but this could be over and above other resources, which were considered in budgeting the amount.³⁸ A person receiving Old Age Assistance was declared ineligible,³⁹ and the limit for transferring or assigning property prior to application was reduced from five to three years.⁴⁰ Additional restrictions were made regarding payment for benefit of recipient which provided that a legal guardian had to be appointed by the court, and give his services without compensation.⁴¹ Recovery from the estate was limited to assistance granted after the individual had reached the age of sixty-five, and the amount recovered was to be apportioned to the state and county in accordance with their respective

³⁶ Ibid., sec. 36

³⁷ Board of State Aid and Charities, Eighteenth Biennial Report, p. 24.

³⁸ Laws of Maryland, 1937, c. 4, sec. 20. ³⁹ Ibid., sec. 18.

⁴⁰ Laws of Maryland, 1939, c. 18, sec. 18.

⁴¹ Laws of Maryland, 1937, c. 4, sec. 24.

contributions.⁴² The annual levy to meet the assistance expenditures was changed so as to provide 35 per cent of the total, rather than the \$250.00 per person previously stipulated.⁴³ Duties of the State Board were outlined, authorizing them to make necessary rules and regulations to carry out the act, to prescribe and supply forms and make necessary reports to, and co-operate with the Federal Government.⁴⁴

Administration

The Board of State Aid and Charities became the State Department of Public Welfare in 1939,⁴⁵ and all the powers of the former Board were transferred to it. The State Department has the power to designate the organizations within the State as are required for the purpose of administering public welfare. It therefore designated the Department of Public Welfare in Baltimore City, and the County Welfare Boards as agents to administer "Public Assistance to the Needy Blind." It also required these agents to appoint county personnel in compliance with the provisions of the State Employment Service, and City personnel in accordance with provisions of the City Service Commission of Baltimore. The State Department reserved the right to prescribe the number, salaries and minimum qualifications of the State Department, and the local Welfare Boards. Thus everyone participating in the administration of assistance to the blind is under civil service.

⁴²Ibid., sec. 30.

⁴³Ibid., sec. 32.

⁴⁴Ibid., sec. 16.

⁴⁵Laws of Maryland, 1939, c. 99, sec. 1

Applications and Recipients

As of April 30, 1936, the Maryland Workshop was granting assistance to 478 cases, and most of these were transferred as applications to the Board of State Aid and Charities on May 1, 1936.⁴⁶ In addition to this group, many were transferred from the Emergency Relief roles, and other new applications were taken, so that by the end of May, a total of 607 applications had been received.⁴⁷ Applications continued to come in, raising the total to 899 in September, 567 of which were accepted. Two counties had no blind persons under care, and the others had only a few, 34 being the largest number of cases in any one county. Baltimore City had the majority of cases, or 66 per cent of the total.⁴⁸

The number of applications made, action taken on them, and the number of pending applications, can be most easily understood by seeing them in tabular form. From October, 1936, through September, 1938, there was very little change in the total number of recipients, although the number of applications increased each year.⁴⁹ This can be explained by reviewing the rejected applications and closed cases. Of a total of 603 applications disposed of during the two-year period, 252 were rejected and 77 were pending at the end of that time.⁵⁰ A study of the 134 cases closed during the year from July, 1937, to June, 1938, showed 73 trans-

⁴⁶ Board of State Aid and Charities, Eighteenth Biennial Report, p. 24.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 56.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 56.

⁴⁹ Board of State Aid and Charities, Nineteenth Biennial Report, p. 26.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 99.

ferred to other categories, 27 deceased, 14 no longer in need of public support, 10 ineligible for the original grant, 5 admitted to institutions, and 5 closed for other reasons.⁵¹ At the present time there are about 30 blind individuals in the Baltimore City Hospital Infirmary who have applied for blind assistance, but because they have been unable to adjust in the community, their applications have been denied, or their assistance discontinued after their return to the institution.

The following tables show applications for and recipients

TABLE 10

NUMBER OF RECIPIENTS OF BLIND ASSISTANCE
OCTOBER 1936-SEPTEMBER 1938

Month	Total	Baltimore City	Counties
October 1936	571	377	194
November	574	379	195
December	574	373	201
January 1937	579	373	206
February	590	375	215
March	602	382	220
April	600	382	218
May	581	376	205
June	587	374	213
July	588	376	212
August	593	381	212
September	595	381	214
October 1937	600	385	215
November	587	389	213
December	573	360	213
January 1938	555	348	207
February	569	355	214
March	575	383	222
April	587	360	227
May	593	364	229
June	597	368	229
July	605	370	235
August	616	374	242
September	615	372	243

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 103.

of Public Assistance to the Needy Blind. They are taken from the Nineteenth Biennial Report of the Board of State Aid and Charities representing the two-year period ending September, 1938.

TABLE 11

APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AND DISPOSED
OF, OCTOBER 1936-SEPTEMBER 1938

		Pending from Preceding Year	Received During Year	Disposed of During Year	Pending at End of Year
Total	Oct. 1936 to Sept. 1937	116	276	353	39
	Oct. 1937 to Sept. 1938	39	288	250	77
<u>Baltimore City</u>	Oct. 1936 to Sept. 1937	38	127	193	19
	Oct. 1937 to Sept. 1938	19	191	170	40
Counties	Oct. 1936 to Sept. 1937	31	149	160	20
	Oct. 1937 to Sept. 1938	20	97	80	37

Finances

From May 1936 to October 1937 the source of funds for Public Assistance to the Needy Blind was divided among the local units of the state as follows: (1) local levy--one-half of expenditures up to \$20 per month, per case; (2) local allotment from state fund--one-half of expenditures in excess of \$20 per month, per

case; (3) federal funds—one-half of expenditures per case. The state funds were raised through special taxes, and local, from general property levy. Because the average grant was less than \$20 per month up until October 1937, the local and federal funds bore the cost of expenditures. Since then the local government has been made responsible for only 35 per cent of the total expenditures, and state funds have therefore been used. The following table, showing the source of funds, and expenditures for a two-year period, indicates clearly the difference between state contribution for 1936-37 and 1937-38.

TABLE 12

EXPENDITURES AND SOURCE OF FUNDS FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE TO THE NEEDY BLIND FROM OCTOBER 1936 TO SEPTEMBER 1938, BY YEARS, AS COMPILED FROM FIGURES IN THE NINETEENTH BIENNIAL REPORT OF THE BOARD OF STATE AID AND CHARITIES

Local Unit	Year	Total Expenditures	Source of Funds		
			Federal	State	Local
Total	1936-37	\$136,526.34	\$63,263.16	\$	\$63,263.18
	1937-38	146,333.33	72,384.20	11,240.50	62,208.63
Baltimore City	1936-37	95,648.21	47,824.41	.....	47,824.41
	1937-38	99,549.36	49,492.20	7,549.14	42,508.02
Counties	1936-37	40,377.53	20,438.75	.....	20,438.78
	1937-38	46,783.97	23,392.00	3,361.40	19,700.57

The average grant in September of 1938 was \$20.98, and there were 615 persons receiving assistance.⁵² This average was a little below the United States average for the same month, of

⁵² Ibid., p. 10.

\$23.36, and farther below the midpoint between the highest of \$47.96 in California and the lowest of \$8.76 in Alabama. The number of recipients per \$100,000 estimated population was 87 for the same month.⁵³ There has been a gradual increase in the number of persons receiving assistance and the average amount of grant, and the State Department of Public Welfare is budgeting for this expense.⁵⁴

⁵³ Social Security Bulletin, I, No. 11 (Washington: Social Security Board, 1938), 57.

⁵⁴ By March of 1940 the average amount of grant in Maryland had increased to \$21.16 and the State Department provided for 793 persons at an average grant of \$23 per month in its request for September of 1941. (Board of State Aid and Charities, Nineteenth Biennial Report, p. 10, and Social Security Bulletin, May, 1940, p. 43.)

CONCLUSIONS

The foregoing chapters are intended to give the historical development of the care of the blind in Maryland. They show how the state followed the general trend of development in the United States and how it has kept pace with the modern systems of blind care. The first mention of the blind in Maryland is found in a general poor law as early as 1650, when provision was made for their care. Since no further mention was made of the blind until 1837, it can be assumed that the poor law was their only recourse during that time, with outdoor relief and almshouse care. Educational measures were the next step in the development, coming in the first half of the nineteenth century, in the form of appropriations for tuition of Maryland pupils in existing schools in other states. Maryland was the sixteenth state to have a blind school, the Maryland Institution for the Instruction of the Blind being incorporated in 1863. As the school progresses its program expands and interest is turned to the adult blind. Out of this movement on behalf of the adult blind came the Maryland Workshop for the Blind in 1909 and later the system of direct relief in 1929, which was later expanded under Public Assistance to the Needy Blind in 1938. As an outgrowth of public sentiment about preventable blindness, which was aroused by private studies of the subject, the Maryland Society for the Prevention of Blindness was created, and general interest in public health, educational

and other preventative measures increased. Sight conservation classes which started in the public schools in 1926 were a natural consequence of this.

Both the educational and industrial institutions started off modestly, but as they expanded their program the number of enrollees increased, reaching a peak between 1915 and 1920 which they retained for about 10 years. Preventative measures, especially regarding ophthalmia neonatorum, caused a decrease in blindness among children. This decrease in the number of blind children and the fact that sight conservation classes together with the general trend away from institutional care absorbed many who would otherwise have been enrolled at the School, account for the diminishing enrollment there. The industrial program in the Workshop had probably touched most of the blind who could utilize it, there being many who were too aged to participate, and therefore the attendance was limited. Probably the greatest reason for the decline at the Workshop was due to the fact that cheap machine-made articles began appearing on the market, and decreased the demand for the more expensive Workshop products. The home teaching program had not been fully developed and it extended to only a small percentage of those who could not come to the Workshop.

With the placing of the administration of public relief for the blind under the Workshop, the number of persons under their care began to increase. Since 1935 public relief has been administered by the counties and Baltimore City, and the Workshop has been free to develop its program and enlarge its enrollment.

Today more persons are under its care than ever before, the majority of them being under the home-extension department.

The Sight Conservation Classes have not yet increased to meet the need. Although the program has progressed and grown, it still does not include children in rural areas, and they are forced to attend the Maryland School for the Blind. The Society for the Prevention of Blindness, since its reorganization in 1926, has become an increasingly useful and important organization, and it is still growing and planning along progressive lines.

All of the institutions in Maryland began as private corporations depending on private subscription, but as public need made additional demands on them, it became necessary for public funds to come to their aid. At the present time the private corporations own their property and get a very small amount through donations, but are otherwise public institutions. When the Board of State Aid and Charities was created in 1900, all of the incorporations receiving state-aid came under their supervision, and were subject to investigation by it. The Board had financial control over the institutions in that after investigation it made recommendations for the yearly appropriations for their maintenance. The Maryland School for the Blind immediately applied for aid through the Board and met with their approval. When the Maryland Workshop was organized it likewise came under the Board. Additional legislative changes enlarged the Board's power, so that now under the name of State Department of Public Welfare it is the central co-ordinating authority in the state, which supervises and considers the whole program of welfare. As such the Public

Assistance to the Needy Blind was turned over to the State Department, which in turn designated the local welfare boards to administer it locally. The State Department reviews and approves all of the local work, studies the system as a whole, and makes recommendations for future care. The Sight Conservation program has always been under the jurisdiction of the State Board of Education. The Society for the Prevention of Blindness is tied up with the whole welfare program through its membership in the Community Fund.

Today Maryland includes in its program, those services recognized as important, including education, rehabilitation, assistance and prevention. From the standpoint of equipment, and type and amount of care the Maryland organizations compare favorable with the rest of the United States, and their programs indicate more adequate care for the future. The employees under the public assistance division are under the merit system, and their qualifications are being continually raised by the State Department of Public Welfare. The State Department supervises all except the Public School Program, and as such has an opportunity to co-ordinate the different divisions of blind care.

Thus the provisions for the blind have gone from "out-door" to "indoor" care, to a new system of relief in the home. From the early poor law care with relief in the individual home, the development has gone through the exclusive institutional phase and has, following the general trend, become selective care both for the adult and children through both education and relief either at home or in institutions.

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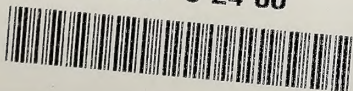
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